

The Chosen One

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Summary: Based many years after the covenant war: alien and human life beginning to build economies among the stars. The War may be over but not its struggles. You follow the story of an unlikely family through this epic adventure. Disclaimer: while the story is set within the Halo universe, all characters are my own creations.

## 1. Chapter 1

**\*\*Chapter One: Dreams or Memories\*\***

**\*\*Sil\*\***

It was quiet.

Almost unnaturally quiet. Like all sound had been completely snuffed out.

There was one sound however, a slight ringing noise, there but at the same time not there. "This is getting weird" Sil thought to herself noting that her vision was blurry too "where am I?"

She tried to see where she was and make out the surrounding area to no avail.

"Damn it, what's wrong with me, why can't I see?" Sil kicked some blurry dirt out from under her two towed boots. Why was there so much dirt anyway? Last she checked she was in a bar run by a group of local Keg Yar traders, playing a game of cards. They were celebrating after she and her Uncle had completed a big cargo job, which ended in killing a lot of Jerohanae and Keg Yar pirates.

Now where was she? Sil was about to scream in frustration when she noticed a lone building surrounded by a stone wall.

"That wasn't there before " Sil thought to herself wondering if it

was safe to take a look. Seeing no other option, she made her way to the stony building.

There was still no sound, other than the constant ringing that was slowly increasing in pitch and getting louder and louder the closer she got.

By the time she got to the old, large wooden gate at the front of the wall the ringing had become unbearable. " I need to get out of here". Sil could barely think, the ringing burned the inside of her head and she did the only thing she could do.

Sil reached for the gate and suddenly her hand was wrenched back by a swirling mass of black smoke.

Sil tried to brake free but found that she had no strength.

She looked at her arms to find that they were small, too small. Her legs were also too small, her body thin and fragile, reduced to a six year old Sangheili child.

She looked up and saw the gaping mouth of a demon with one single piercing red eye.

Sil woke screaming, already on her feet and in a fighting stance, her blade in hand ready to kill anything that moved. Then she realised that she was in her room aboard her Uncle's ship.

She also realised she was still wearing her cloths and boots and the light was on but not so much it hurt.

Then Sil smelled it, cheap Keg Yar booze.

Sil chuckled "So that's how I don't remember last nightâ€¦ I got drunk" Sil said to herself, relieved. Uncle Jack must have dragged her back to the ship when she got a little too tipsy and left her to recover in her room. Well, that explained why the light was still on.

What couldn't be explained was that dream.

It was too vivid to be a normal dream but what did it mean? Never in her life did she feel so helpless. Even when her Uncle did things for her, it never felt the way it felt in that nightmare. Before she could ponder over it anymore she heard the heavy thuds of her Uncle's fists pounding on the door. "Sil are you awake?" came the deep rumbling voice of Uncle Jack, he must not of heard her scream if he was just checking up on her now. With a sigh, Sil lazily dropped her blade on the bed and walked over to the door, pressing the activation switch, which opened it. Standing in front of her nearly two metres tall, with large muscles, dark skin, short grayish-black hair and matching beard, was Uncle Jack. Before Sil could even say a single word Uncle Jack said " You should remember not to guzzle it down next time we have a big celebration." Sil could not even find the words, he had pretty much said it all. "You should go and do some exercise and work the alcohol out of your system, then get a shower. I won't even describe what your breath smells like". Should she tell him about her dream? What would he say about it? She decided not to. It was probably nothing. Clenching all four of her jaws together she simply nodded and left to go down the hall and in to the cargo bay.

But before she could go out the door Uncle Jack put a hand on her shoulder and simply said " Happy sixteenth birthday ".

Sil tried her best to smile but having a four-way jaw made it hard. With that, she made her way to the cargo bay for some much needed exercise.

**\*\*Jackson 001\*\***

It had been a while since the celebration of last night's cargo job and Sil had gotten herself drunk and was sleeping it off. It was also Sil's birthday. To think it's been exactly ten years since he firstâ€|

"No" Jackson shook his head. He didn't want to even think about it, not now.

Being nearly two meters tall and the ship wasn't that big to begin with it didn't take him long to get to Sil's room.

He knocked three times on the door and said "Sil are you awake?"

There was no reply.

He was about to knock again when the door slid open and there, with her torn up leather jacket, short black trousers and brown leather boots, was Sil.

"You should remember not to guzzle it down next time we have a celebration".

From her expression, he could tell he had said everything she needed to hear. He also reminded her that she really needed exercise and take a shower, before he let her go Jackson put a hand on her shoulder and said "Happy sixteenth birthday".

That caught her off guard and she cracked a smile, well at least something that resembled a smile, but Jackson didn't need to be a Sangheili to tell she was beaming.

Jackson stood there long enough to watch Sil round the corner at the bottom of the hall and disappear into the cargo bay.

Jackson wanted to join her but he had some unfinished business to attend to first.

Back in the cockpit, Jackson came back in time to see that someone was trying to call him, "And I bet I know who" he thought taking a seat at the controls.

He took a moment to collect himself before accepting the call and opening the channel.

A video feed came through the screen in front of him, and as he had guessed, it was none other than Kala Van, his Keg Yar contractor. In other words, his boss.

Kala, as always was sitting in her command chair no doubt looking over her entire business operation.

Her features were not that much different from a male Keg Yar apart from being slightly smaller and more scaly. For some reason her skull always reminded him of a birds.

"Ah Jackson, my favorite Human, how have you been lately?" Kala's high, crackly voice made Jackson's skin crawl, and he swore it always sounded like she was flirting with him.

"I take it the cargo job went off with out a hitch?" Jackson could barley contain his anger "You know damn well what happened." He contained his rage through clenched teeth trying to compose himself. "Me and Sil almost died because you failed to mention that the space we traveled through had, not just Keg Yar, but Jeroghonae pirates as well".

Kala grinned, leaning back in her chair. "I might have kept that little detail from you" she said not even bothering to look sorry. "If I had told you, what would have happened? You would have never taken the job, and you're very good at what you do, am I right?"

Jackson stayed silent, his jaw muscles tight with anger.

"Oh don't take it so personally" Kala said, "It worked out in the end, you should be hap.." Jackson cut her off.

"You still should have told me the risks, now give us our payment." Kala brought up her arm and raised a finger.

"Uh uh uh, not so fast. I have one more thing I need you to do for me".

"Do NOT, TEST me" Jackson's anger was over flowing now.

"WE went through hell to get this job done and&#128;and you're telling me there's more."

"You forget that it was I who brought you the most profit."

"It was me who did the jobs no one else had the stomach for" Kala didn't even so much as twitch, in fact she seem rather amused.

"You forget, that it was I who took you and Sil in all those years ago, I gave you food, shelter, I even gave you a ship". "And most importantly, I gave you medicine for Sil's mental condition. She would have died if it were not for me. You owe me".

Defeated, Kala had put him in a corner, and she knew it. Knowing full well that her point was justified.

"Ok, what do you want me to do" Jackson said leaving no hint of emotion in his tone.

"I knew you would come around", Kala said "After this I promise you and I are even." This time Kala had dropped her flirting and carefree image, and was now serious.

"I have transmitted landing coordinates to your ship to help a certain someone on the planet Vinasiae. There, you will get the rest

of your mission details and payment too." Kala leaned forward in her chair, clasping her hands together and looking straight into Jackson's eyes. "This is a secret contract, only you and your crew are allowed to know of it."

Jackson stone face expression changed into a smirk "Is that it, or is there more unexpected things in this along the way. Cause if you lie to me, you know what ill do."

Kala cut the feed but not before saying "You make your own way from here, only time can tell you what lays ahead."

Jackson sat there looking at the now empty screen thinking about what he had just got him and Sil into now.

With a sigh he got up from his seat, walked over to the door just outside the cockpit and pressed a button to open the door.

Inside the room was a small bed in the corner, a desk and a weapon rack.

What stood out the most however was a large stand and upon it was a complete black set of scared, battered and half melted suit of, Mark V Spartan armor.

**\*\*Sil\*\***

Sil spent the better part of an hour working what was left of the alcohol out of her system.

She went through several different exercises, which consisted of, weight lifting, sit ups, pull-ups, even jogging on the spot, finishing it all up running on a treadmill.

With all the alcohol finally out of her system she did what uncle Jack told her and hit the shower.

While in the shower, Sil could not stop thinking about that dream she had had. It felt too real, like it wasn't a dream at all. More like a memory, and it had something to do with that old stone building. But every time she thought of it the image of that monster came flooding back, and with it, a slight pain.

Sil looked at her four-fingered hand and found it was shaking slightly. She felt lightheaded, she took some deep breaths to try and clam herself down. When she looked again her hand was still, and the pain in her head had lessened.

After a good fifteen minutes in the shower, Sil came out with her hair still damp and a towel on the back of her neck. She was about to go see her uncle in the cockpit when she heard some scuffling coming from the back of a couple of crates.

Knowing that they had had stowaways in the past, Sil quietly went over to one of the weights and picked it up. Now armed, she silently moved to the crates and got ready to hit whoever was hiding.

What came out from the crates wasn't a stowaway, but the ship's janitor, an Ungoe named Yim Yam.

"Yim Yam!" Sil shouted out, putting the weight down and rushing over to give the small alien a big bear hug. Yim Yam yelped in surprise as his arms were pined to his sides and he was lifted off the floor.

"Ouch, Mistress Sil" Yim Yam cried out "Yim Yam not expect you to sneak up on him, Mistress" Sil looked at him "You getting me wet".

"OH sorry" Sil said putting him down "I didn't mean to scare you".

"Not scare" Yim Yam said, "You just startled me is all".

Sil laughed and said "I'm just happy to see you're ok, considering you took on a brute with a mop and bucket of water".

Yim Yam laughed to "Yim Yam know that putting soup water in someone's eyes, makes it hard for them to see you Mistress".

Sil crouched and put a hand on Yim Yam's head, giving him a quick ruffle, "You know you don't have to keep calling me Mistress, it's just Sil".

Yim Yam just shrugged and said "Yim Yam can't help it. Yim Yam was taught to always call the ones who own him, Master or Mistress, Mistress".

"But I don't own you" Sil said "Come on I told you this before. We're friends, ship mates, we all do our part, and help each other" Sil sighed, "Well I'm glad you're ok. What were you doing back there anyway?"

Yim Yam looked around and scratched his head, "Yim Yam heard some noises, coming from the back of the room" he snorted under his breathing mask, "Might be some yummy rats".

Sil didn't want to think about her friend's eating habits, so she got up and turned in the direction of the cargo bay door and said "Well, see you later".

Before she could take two steps, Yim Yam caught her wrist, stopping her, "Wait Mistress, Yim Yam just remembered" The small Ungoe said cheerfully.

Sil turned to see he had a necklace in his over-sized hand, her necklace.

"You dropped this at the bar. You know you were pulling funny faces back there".

Yim Yam looked a bit embarrassed "Yim Yam thought he should give it back to you. He know how much you like it".

Sil didn't know what to say, she simply took it, and looked at it.

It was a length of thin thread, with a small emerald gem and a crystal in the center. Her most treasured possession. She had had it since she was just a child.

Sil shook her head, collecting her thoughts. Finally she managed to say, "Thank you Yim Yam, this means a lot to me. I don't know what I would have done if I had lost it. Thank you".

Yim Yam puffed up his chest with pride and said "Ah it nothin'".

Sil gave him one last hug before heading out of the cargo bay, past her own room and in to the cockpit.

Sil didn't find her uncle at the controls; instead she was met with an empty room.

"He must be in his room then!" she thought, back tracking out of the cockpit and facing her uncle's room door.

She was about to knock on the door when she saw a note stuck to it.

Sil peeled the note off the door and started reading it.

"Sil if you're reading this, I want you to start up the engines, take us into orbit and punch in these numbers" The rest of the note was a list of numbers leading to a planet she had heard about before.

"Vinasia!" Sil thought.

But that planet is just a frozen wasteland. It had no life on it, and as far as she knows, no one went there, it was just too hazardous.

"I'm going to have a little chat with uncle once he's done doing whatever it is he's doing".

Sil took a seat at the controls and got to work.

After getting the ship in orbit she typed in the list of numbers, automatically kicking in the sub light engines.

Now that the ship was on course, Sil had pretty much had nothing to do.

There was the sound of a door cycling open and something heavy thudding through the now open door.

Sil poked her head around the seat to see her uncle in his old, battle-worn, black power armor.

Sil couldn't remember what the armor was called, but that wasn't important.

What was important was if he is wearing his armor, things were going to be serious.

"Are we on course?" came the now metallic voice of her uncle.

"Yes, we should get there in a day at this speed. Are you going to tell me what we're doing, and why we're going to Vinasia?"

Sil's uncle took his helmet off and from his expression, she could tell it wasn't going to be good.

## 2. Chapter 2

**\*\*Chapter 2: Old Wounds\*\***

**\*\*Location: Remains of Harvest, aboard Ex-Covenant carrier ship, Unbreakable Truth\*\***

**\*\*Ral'm'Hondow\*\***

It was dark, blindingly dark.

Only the faint glow of a massive fire, with rubble and debris at its center, broke the empty void.

Sangheili bodies lay everywhere, their faces almost unrecognizable, their bodies twisted and broken, and they all surrounded Ral's feet.

"Why?" Ral whispered, "What could they have done to deserve this?" Ral fell to his knees and put a hand on one of the bodies' faces he knew too well. He could recognize her face; the flames had not burned away what beauty she had left.

Tears started streaming down his face as he hugged the body of his dead wife. "Why?" he said louder turning into a scream "WHYYYY?"

Ral woke with a gasp, sitting up in his bed now in his private room, the memory of his dead wife and family was still fresh in his mind, "Even after ten years she still haunts my dreams. Why Kinra, why do you do this to me?"

Ral got up from his bed and went to look at the trophies he had earned over his lifetime.

They consisted of old blades, Human weapon fragments and samples from worlds he glassed. But there was one he didn't earn, the arm of a human demon. It was there in the rubble and remains of his home, it had been cut clean through the shoulder and from the lack of a body the demon must have survived. He had taken it and kept it here to remind him of what he had lost.

There was the sound of static, and then a voice came through the ship's speakers. "Ship Master Ral this is Cano speaking. I would like to speak with you on the bridge if you have the time."

Ral grumbled in his throat, it was like Cano to know when he would be in his room mulling over the past. A few minutes later and Ral was in his full ship master armour, he was about to leave his room when he stopped and looked one more time at the dead arm on his wall, "I will find you and when I do, it will be a slow death", he said, as he did every day.

His ship was large and had a fine crew of 800 strong Sangheili warriors, all ready to fight and die for the cause. It didn't take Ral long to get to where he was needed, and sure enough there was his oldest friend waiting for him on the bridge.



"Ah there you are" came the warm greeting "I was beginning to think you had gotten lost in this new ship".

Ral laughed and said, "This ship is older than you and I put together."

Cano chuckled at that "Yeah, she sure is". Greetings aside, Ral got straight to the point and said, "You wished to speak with me?"

Cano turned to face the viewscreen that dominated the bridge, and said "Why are we here Ship Master? Why did we come back to this dead planet? There's nothing down there but ash and glass?"

Ral stood next to Cano and said, "It's not the planet I'm here for."

Cano looked puzzled "Then what are we here for? What could there possibly be?" Ral looked at his friend keeping his expression plain, "I have had intel that a ship was seen here a few days ago, it was a Keg Yar vessel and they were doing something on the planet's surface. The scouts say they weren't spotted. I have a good feeling they'll be back".

Cano looked sceptical and a little worried "What makes you think they'll be back, 'cause I see no reason why they would return?"

Ral turned his entire body to face Cano and look into his eyes. "You do not see because you only see what's in front of your eyes. You do not see the reason because you only see them as space rats and not a threat".

It was Cano's turn to face Ral, standing straight and looking at him through narrowed eyelids "Then tell me Ship Master, what do you think they are doing? What do you think their reason for coming here is?" Ral looked back at the viewscreen and said, "If my instincts, and my knowledge of the Keg Yar are correct, they will return, because Keg Yar are greedy and the scouts went down to the spot the Keg Yar were. They say there's still plenty they could scavenge. All that and they left a camp unguarded, still full of supplies. They would not do that unless they were coming back for the rest. That's how I know they will return".

Cano's face looked unsettled as he leaned against the railing of the viewing platform. Cano looked at Ral and said, "Even so, I still see no reason to go to all this trouble just to catch some Keg Yar pirates".

Ral looked from the screen to the rest of the bridge, watching all the other Sangheili go about their work and saying as he did, "I would agree if not for the capture of one Keg Yar still on the planet. My scouts said the rat told them that he was waiting for his crew to return and get the rest of their equipment".

"Did he say where they were returning from?" Cano said straightening up at this new info.

"No, he died before the scouts could get it out of him, and this is what puzzles me. Why would a Keg Yar rather die than tell his captors the truth? What could be so important that he would keep it secret

with his life?"

It was Cano's turn to look puzzled, he brought up a hand and started to rub one of his jaws, then said 'That is suspicions, that a Keg Yar would willingly die to keep that a secret'

Ral nodded but before he could say any more, a Keg Yar ship appeared on the ship's sensors and had no idea that they had fallen into a trap.

"Well, my old friend" Ral said grinning, "Maybe its time we found out".

**\*\*Location: On root to Vinishia, aboard human, Keg Yar hybrid cargo vessel- The Rust Bucket.\*\***

**\*\*23 hours later\*\***

**\*\*Sil\*\***

Sil had slept most of the ride to the planet Vinishia and was still pissed off after learning they had been use by that bitch Kala Van. The worst part was, Kala had used Sil's mental condition and her need for medicine as a way to put her uncle in his so-called place. "Why, the nerve of that bitch just makes me wanna kill her", Sil said out loud for her uncle to hear who was at the controls in the cockpit. He was still in his armour, but at least he had taken his helmet off so she could see his expressions. The annoying part was he had no expressions, which made it like he was still wearing a helmet. "Why do you not look bothered, at least show some emotion. I feel like I'm the only one that's actually pissed off right now". Before she could continue a stab of pain went through Sil's head and it was not fading "Ahh sivla" Sil swore in Keg Yar, clutching her head with both hands.

"You haven't taken your meds yet have you?" uncle Jack said looking at her, a hint of concern on his human face.

Sil clenched all four of her jaws together and managed to say in a pained voice "Maybe. So what?"

The concern on uncle Jack's face became very clear. He stood up from his seat, put his armoured hands her shoulders and gently helped her sit down in the co-pilot seat. He then knelt down next to her and started rubbing her head to help with the pain. "You silly, stupid girl, you know why you need to take the meds. Do you really want to be in pain all the time?"

Sil managed to look up to see he was smiling and chuckling too. "What's so funny, do you like seeing me in pain?" Sil said.

"No its not that, its just you remind me of myself when I was your age. The stubborn part mostly".

Sil tried to laugh but just moaned instead, as fresh pain pulsed through her head. "Can you get the meds now? I don't wanna start crying. It's embarrassing".

Sil's uncle left the cockpit and came back with her medicine. It was in the form of a syringe for instant effect. Sil hated this part

because it was injected through her neck and it wasn't pleasant.

"Ok, now, do you want to do it or do you want me to do it?" her uncle said.

Sil looked at him and said "Just do it already."

He injected it in her neck and as always it felt terrible, a few seconds later the pain was gone completely.

Uncle Jack put a hand on her head and twisted it so she was looking into his eyes. He held up the syringe in front of him and said "I know you hate this stuff but you need it if you don't want to be in pain." He stood up and went to sit back down at his seat. "Its not just to stop you being in pain. It stops me being in pain knowing you have taken it", he continued.

Sil looked out of view port, watching all the stars go by and said, "If you are so worried about it why not try and see if some doctor can get this piece of metal out of my head?"

He looked at her with a sad expression and said "You know why that can't happen Sil, it's too risky. You could die, or lose your memory. Do you really want that? Do you?" Sil's uncle sat back in his seat and looked a little more relaxed. "And besides you'd have to be more rich than Kala Van, if you wanted something like that".

Sil closed her eyes and taking a deep breath, said "I know. I just wanted to hear it out loud." She was about to say more when a ringing came through the speakers, filling the cockpit with sound.

"Well, we're here now." He said, typing commands into the ship's computer. "Slowing down and cutting sub-lights, now."

The view port was filled with the mass of the planet Vinishia and it's two moons "My, doesn't that look chilly?" uncle Jack said sarcastically. "I'm going to set the Rust Bucket 700m away from the landing zone. Should give us enough room to get a good look at what we're dealing with".

Sil was sceptical. Pointing out the storms that inhabited the planet. "How are we supposed to see where we're going if we're walking 700 metres in a blizzard?"

"Easy" uncle Jack said with a cocky smile "I've set a waypoint in my helmet so we know where we're going. Nothing to it."

"Easy for you to say" Sil said folding her arms. "You're the one with the helmet after all". Sil looked at the sensors and saw nothing "Why aren't we picking up any readings? Are we sure there's even anything down there? 'Cause I don't want to walk that far and find nothing."

Sil's uncle got up, turned to the door and said "Storms are interfering with the ships sensors so we're walking in blind. I want you to be on full alert down there." He started walking out the door speaking as he went, "The autopilot is on so lets get ready for a cold landing." And with that, they went to the cargo bay and got ready to face the cold.

**\*\*Location: Vinishia on the surface at research base alpha.\*\***

**\*\*8 hours earlier.\*\***

**\*\*Neaola Roscal\*\***

Neaola stood alone on a landing pad over-looking the frozen hellhole she spent 7 months in. Her reptilian body was covered head to tow in fur clothing and even that didn't stop her scales from aching. "Blast this weather", she said letting her tone go bitter. "Why of all places did my husband choose to conduct his work here? And where is that damned ship?" She had sent out a ship two days ago and it had not returned. "It's not like Chiva to be late."

The sound of static broke Neaola from her thoughts and she heard a voice crackling through the speaker.

"You left your radio on again, I can hear you talking to yourself." The voice was in Sangheili and it was a voice she knew all too well.

"You cheeky selva you were listening the whole time weren't you? You handsome oaf." The voice on the other side burst into laughter barely controlling himself.

"Oh, how can I not listen to your beautiful voice? Just hearing your voice makes my days in this frozen wasteland worth it."

Neaola turned and headed back into the warmth of alpha base. As she walked she kept speaking "Tell me again why we're here, it's been nearly 8 months since you started your research here and you've come up with nothing so far".

Neaola's husband sounded downcast as he said, "I know our efforts have come up with little results, but I just know it's here somewhere in this frozen ice mountain. I just know it".

Neaola smiled as she opened the large steel double doors and went inside "I don't doubt you Chackrol, I'm sure we'll find it" Neaola shed her fur coat and hung it up with the others. Then she started adjusting her tool belt and boots, and made sure her armour chest plate was on right. It tended to come undone now and again. She spotted one of her Keg Yar colleagues who was sleeping on the job. Again.

She went over and kicked him off his chair, making him yell out in surprise as he fell on to the icy floor. She put her clawed boot on his chest, pinning him and looked down on him.

He managed to spurt out "Neaola! What are you doing up here? I thought you were down fixing diggers or something."

She bent lower, putting more pressure on his chest and said with a grin, "Oh Chocra" then shouted "You're suppose to be watching the front door, it's what my husband pays you for so why are you napping?"

Chocra tried to speak but was cut off when Neaola grabbed the spines on his head and hauled him to his feet.

She still held his spines in her clawed hands and said "It's time I moved you outside, maybe the nice weather will wake you up."

"Bâ€|but" he tried to say but Neaola cut him off again.

"I'm second in command here, only my husband can change my mind, And he's busy right now, so move your lazy ass and take your post" she then added, "Or I could just cut your payment? You choose".

Cutting ones payment out here is just as good as cutting ones throat, so with no other opinions Neaola let him go. But before he could move, she stopped him and added, "There's a ship that's been missing for a few days. I want you to tell me as soon as you see a ship coming in ok?"

He just nodded and went on his way. Neaola's radio spoke again and it was her husband's voice, "I'm still here you know, right?"

"Ohâ€|um" Neaola was lost for words, she had done it again "I'll just make my way down to you" she finally said. And with that, she made her way down to the lower levels.

After climbing down seven ladders, and trekking through two walkways and three tunnels, Neaola had travelled 500 meters below the planet's icy surface. Soon enough, she was in the same ice chamber as her husband.

Now, most would say a Sangheili male and a Keg Yar female getting married is impossible. It just wouldn't happen. Even with that knowledge, it didn't stop Chackrol and Neaola being with each other. She didn't care what others said, as long as she and her husband were together, nothing else mattered.

Neaola spotted her husband near the digging machine over-looking the other workers progress. He was 2 meters tall, had dark skin, and one side of his body was robotic, as a result of a human grenade. He turned his head in her direction and spotted her approach.

"Neaola" he called out walking over and giving her a loving embrace "How are things up top?"

Neaola returned the hug with her own, having to stand on the tips of her toes to do so. "Cold" was her reply. "But you knew that already. How are things down here?"

Chackrol turned to face the digger, keeping one hand on Naeola's shoulder, and started pointing at the digger with his right robotic hand.

"The digger's engine is broken and is in need of replacement parts".

Neaola lowered her eyelids and muttered, "A ship with replacement parts was supposed to be here days ago".

Chackrol was about to say something when an old, barking voice came from behind them. They both turned to see an old Keg Yar male approaching them and Neaola knew whom it was.

"Oh, father" Neaola said rubbing the back of her neck "I did not see you thereâ€|um".

The old male stood there in front of them and was glaring at Chackrol. "You better not be touching my daughter in the wrong places Sangheili."

That made their faces blush and made the conversation very awkward.

"Father" Neaola said through clenched teeth, "Why would you ask something like that? It's none of your business".

Chackrol just coughed and looked away, trying to find something to save him from this.

"Well?" The old male asked again.

"No I have not" came Chackrol's reply "Why do you always ask such awkward things when we're together'.

"Because I'm her father that's way. It's not that you're a Sangheili. I would still ask these things even if you were a Keg Yar."

Chackrol cleared his throat and changed the subject "Neaola why don't you tell your father about the missing ship?"

"Oh right, um" before she could speak her radio started crackling and a voice came through. It was Chocra and he sounded concerned.

"Neaola, are you there?"

She tapped her radio and said, "What is it? Has the ship returned?"

"I don't know. It's hard to tell. But wait, it'sâ€| It's a covenant drop ship!"

Neaola's blood went cold as she heard those words and knew what it meant.

"Alert everyone. We have covenant in the base." She tried to get more info but the line went dead.

### 3. Chapter 3

**\*\*Chapter 3: Deadly Encounter\*\***

**\*\*Location: The Rust Bucket's cargo bay on Vinishia's surface.\*\***

**\*\*Present Day.\*\***

**\*\*Jackson 001\*\***

Jackson and Sil had done jobs in the past that required them to go through hazardous environments so this was nothing new.

"So, how cold is it out there?" Sil asked, still pulling on her winter clothing.

Jackson had gone outside to take a temperature reading to see how cold it was, and it was troublesome.

"It's about 32 below freezing. Was that the answer you were looking for?"

Sil caught on to his sarcasm, so she crossed her eyes and bared her teeth in a mocking fashion then said in a sarcastic tone "Oh, you're so funny."

Jackson just chuckled, his helmet making it sound like metallic coughs, then saying "Hey, I'm not that bad, but I'm not kidding when I say don't leave a single piece of your skin exposed. I don't want you getting frostbite".

Sil just rolled her eyes and continued putting on her clothes while Jackson started speaking to Yim Yam, "Now I want you to look after the ship while we're gone. Make sure the engines don't freeze over or we'll be stuck here, got it?"

Yim Yam did a lazy salute and said, "Yim Yam knows. Yim Yam always look after ship while Master and Mistress have all the fun".

"I mean it Yim." Jackson said in a more serious tone, "This is an important job I'm giving you".

Yim Yam put up his hand and pointed his thumb at himself and said, "No worries Yim Yam got it covered, ship in good hands".

Not really convinced Jackson just nodded and went back over to Sil who had finally finished getting her winter clothes on. "Ok" Jackson said "Let's arm up."

They had a small variety of weaponry consisting of two shotguns, three MA5b assault rifles, four magnums, one anti-material rifle (sniper), a few throwing knives and grenades. Jackson went for his default layout, carrying one assault rifle, a magnum, two grenades and a custom made sword. Where Sil liked carrying her throwing knives, a magnum and shotgun, but this time she went for the sniper instead of a shotgun.

"Whoa there" Jackson said taking the sniper "This is a bit overkill, don't you think?"

Sil started waving her arms about in annoyance "Oh, COME ON!" she protested, "I never get to use that one".

Jackson put the sniper back on the table and started walking to a lone crate. He came back over and had an odd looking long weapon in one hand, and some kind of backpack in the other. Sil looked at him in puzzlement, not sure what to make of this.

"I know how much you want to use the sniper" he said tilting his head slightly "But you have to learn how to use this first." He held up the weapon and gestured for her to take it.

"What is it?" she said examining it. Then her eyes went wide as she realised what it was, "Is thisâ€¦ a bow?"

Sil took the bow and the backpack, she now knew had arrows in. She took out one and attached it.

"It's a compound bow." Jackson said " Happy late birthday present. It wasn't easy to get, so treat it well."

Sil pulled back the string and got a feel for it "Wow thanks uncle" she said smiling "I've always wanted one of these, and now I have one".

>"Just don't start shooting it in here" Jackson said turning to the access ramp "That thing can go through the bulkhead".<p>

Jackson and Sil stood at the access ramp and did one final check on their equipment. Jackson's MJOLNIR Mark V was designed to withstand harsh environments, so he didn't have to worry about the cold. What he did worry about was Sil. She didn't have the same hardware as he did, so she was more at risk getting hypothermic.

"Ok now it's the shield check." On Jackson's heads-up display (HUD) his energy shield was full "Ok, turn around and let me see yours" Sil turned and let Jackson see the shield generator she had strapped to her back.

It was a small thing, not as strong as Jackson's, but it did its job well enough. A minute later and Sil's shield bar was reading full on his HUD.

"Ok" Jackson said shifting his weight from one foot to the other "Ready for this long walk?"

Sil looked at him through her snow goggles and said with a muffled voice through her scarf "Lets go and get this over with". Jackson pulled a lever and with a grinding screech the access ramp opened to the frozen wastes of Vinishia.

**\*\*Location: Vinishia's frozen wasteland.\*\***

**\*\*400 meters later.\*\***

**\*\*Sil\*\***

It was so cold. Sil couldn't stop her jaws from chattering and her hands and feet were numb. The edges of her goggles had frozen over making it harder to see in the blizzard. "How long till we get there?" Sil said with a shivering voice.

The cold didn't affect her uncle while he was in his armour. He put a hand up to his helmet and pressed a button, which connected to the earpiece he had given her to talk better in the blizzard. He said, "It's not far now, only 300 meters to go" as he walked he turned his head and look at Sil "How are you holding up so far?" he said not sounding too concerned so as not to hurt her pride.

"Oh I'm doing great, never better" Sil said rubbing her arms "The sooner I get out of this blizzard, the better I'll feel" Sil thought to herself. She fell over when her foot went through some deep snow and was almost buried.



"Sil!" her uncle called out rushing over to help her up.  
>"I'm fine, I'm fine, you don't have to help me up, I can take care of myself", Sil yelled as she shook her uncle off.<p>

"Hey, don't give me that, we're a team, we look out for each other".

Sil pointed ahead and said, "Can we just keep walking. I'm freezing as it is".

They continued a few more meters when Sil's uncle took her by the shoulder and spun her around to face him. He held her there and started speaking "You don't have to do everything by yourself, you can turn to me. You can talk to me, stop being so stubborn" he started raising his voice "Stubbornness can get you killed, and when you're like this Iâ€|" he stopped himself and took a deep breath letting it out slowly. When he had finally composed himself he said, "I'm sorry, I didn't mean to say that".

"No" Sil said, "You're right, I'm being childish. I should be the one saying sorry".

Uncle Jack gave Sil a hug and said, "It's ok, and I know how you feel. Come on let'sâ€|" before he finished his sentence a loud screech came from the direction they were walking in. Sil and uncle Jack both drew their weapons, Sil took out her side arm and her uncle took out his assault rifle and aimed at where the sound came from.

"What was that?" Sil said sweeping the area with her magnum.

"Not sure" her uncle said also sweeping with his rifle. The sound came again, louder this time.

"Heads up" he said, "We got two bogies and they're heading this way".

"I thought there wasn't any wildlife on this planet?" Sil asked.

"There isn't" Sil's uncle said "But we got bogies and they're very much alive".

It was at this point Sil wished she had a motion tracker. It was annoying not knowing where her enemies were coming from.

"Where?" Sil asked.

"There" her uncle said pointing forward.

Sil aimed and got ready to shoot, when a Keg Yar with fur clothing came out the haze of the blizzard and stopped in his tracks.

"Don't move" Sil's uncle growled aiming his weapon at the alien.

"A human?" the Keg Yar gasped, "What are? Never mind, listenâ€|" before he could say anything a set of twin blade like energy spikes bust through his chest and lifted him off the ground.

Sil let out a gasp as the poor alien was cut clean in two, his purple blood staining the pure white snow, and something elseâ€¦

Some of the blood hung in the air, as if suspended by some unseen force.

"Oh shit" Sil's uncle said slowly as something began to appear. Sil could now make out a faint shape as the thing became clearer. It was 3 meters tall and was wearing large white fur, layered body armour, that was dented, scared and covered in bullet holes. Sil had never seen this type of alien before, and it was terrifying.

"Ultra" Sil's uncle shouted, "Move".

Before Sil could ask what he meant by Ultra the large alien shot forward swinging a long blade of energy in their direction. Sil moved, duking under the sizzling blade missing her by inches. She was about to bring her gun up when the alien kicked it out of her hand and went to grab her with it's large four-fingered hand. Sil smacked its hand to the side, spun on her heel and delivered a kick to the alien's massive helmeted head, stunning it. Sil pulled out one of her knives and went to stab it in the throat, but alien recovered quickly and brought up it's own blade. Sil had no time to react as the blade cut through the armour on her left arm. Her shield took the worst of it but it still cut deep in her arm, making her cry out in pain.

Before Sil could recover the alien brought up it's boot and kicked her in the face, knocking her goggles and scarf off. Sil fell flat on her back, stunned, her vision blurry, and she tasted blood in her mouth. "I got to get up" she said to herself as the large alien slowly approached her "Get up or you're dead." Sil's body refused to move. She watched helplessly as the alien brought up its blade for the killing blow, to suddenly stop and stare at her, tilting it's head like it was confused.

"Sil" her uncle's voice came through her ear-mic "You're in my line of fire, MOVE!".

Sil rolled to the side as her uncle unloaded on the large alien, it brought up its blade and deflected the incoming bullets, some getting through, but they just bounced off its shield. It charged, still deflecting the bullets and let out a battle cry.

**\*\*Jackson 001\*\***

"MOVE!" Jackson opened fired as Sil rolled to the side and was out the line of fire. He kept up the stream of bullets as the Ultra charged, still deflecting each one. Suddenly his gun jammed "Fuck" he swore as the Ultra slammed into him with his blade, burning through his assault rifle. In one move Jackson twisted his gun so the blade wasn't pointing at him, took the Ultra under its arm and threw it over his shoulder. This sent the alien flying into a mound of deep snow, making it drop its energy blade. In the same move Jackson pulled out his own sword and flipped a switch on its hilt, bring to life. Arks of white and blue of energy danced off its metal surface. Jackson leaped into the air to bring his blade down on head of the still buried Ultra. The Ultra burst from the snow and two smaller blades of energy appeared on it gauntlets. Before Jackson's blade could connect, the Ultra moved to the side and delivered a blow to

Jackson's shoulder, burning it but not piercing the metal. Jackson spun and kicked the Ultra in the stomach, knocking it back. Both he and the Ultra stood their ground. Jackson took up a stance similar to an ancient Samurai putting his legs apart, holding his sword with both hands and pointing it outwards. Where the Ultra leaned back and pointed its left arm straight at Jackson and put its right arm up in an L shape. They stood there watching each other, waiting for one to make the first move. For about two minutes they just stood there before they started slowly circling one another. Still neither attacked. They just moved in a clockwise motion watching, waiting, the blizzard swirling all around them. It was the Ultra that made the first move, extending its arms and spinning on its heels. Jackson blocked the deadly blows, sparks and lightning dancing off their blades. He threw an under arm swing right for the Ultra's chest, but the Ultra saw this coming and with one move swept Jackson's blade out of his grasp. Momentarily surprised, Jackson had completely forgotten Ultras were masters at swordplay, and knew how to fool and disarm. With his blade gone the Ultra came right at him. "But—" Jackson thought "You're not the only one with tricks" Jackson brought his arms up and started blocking blow after blow with his armour, letting his shield take the worst of it. The Ultra was getting angry now, its attacks getting more desperate till it slowed down just enough for Jackson to deliver a heavy punch right in the Ultra's face. The blow was hard, sending shockwaves up Jackson's arm. The Ultra's shield popped and half of the face part of its helmet broke off revealing its Sangheili features underneath. Now that the Ultra's shields were down, Jackson tackled the large alien to the ground and started punching repeatedly in its face, not letting the Ultra's shields back up. Managing to grab Jackson's hand the Ultra head butted him hard in the chest, winding him and flipping him over onto his back. Now that the Ultra had pinned Jackson it brought its bladed gauntlet down and tried to stab him. Jackson caught it, but he was still winded and he couldn't hold it. Slowly the blade started cutting through the exposed under-layer of his suit and was going deeper now cooking his skin. Jackson wanted to cry out but he hadn't gotten his breath back so he just let out a moan as the blade went even deeper. "I can't die" he thought, thinking of Sil "Not now".

**\*\*Sil\*\***

Sil watched as her uncle's blade went flying from his grasp and he blocked the alien's blows with his armoured arms. Sil still couldn't move, the pain in her left arm was almost unbearable and the cold wasn't helping. In fact, it made it worse. If she didn't get up now she'd freeze on the spot. Sil rolled on to her belly and started slowly getting up. By the time she had gotten to her knees, Uncle Jack had pinned the big alien and was pummeling him into the ground. Maybe he was going to win. Uncle Jack had fought brutes twice that size with his bare hands; there was no way he could lose. Sil's hopes were dashed, as the big alien managed to roll uncle Jack onto his back and was now stabbing him. "No!" Sil cried out trying to get to her feet, but they had gone numb in the cold and she just fell on her belly again. "Shit, get up, get up" she said to herself, willing her body to move. She got back on her knees and pulled out her compound bow, took out an arrow and attached it. But how was she going to fire it with an injured arm, and what if she missed? "No" she thought "No room for doubt." With that she started to pull back the string. Fresh pain shot up her arm as she pulled, it felt like her arm was on fire. She finally got the string all the way back and was taking aim. Her vision was getting blurry as the pain burned her arm. If she didn't

shoot now, she was going to pass out. Focusing with all her will, she aimed at the Ultra and fired. It flew straight and true, as the arrow buried itself in the alien's neck. "Got ya" she said as her vision went dark and she fell to the ground.

**\*\*Jackson 001\*\***

Jackson heard a whooshing sound and a loud thud as the blade in his shoulder disappeared. He looked up to see blood pouring out of the Ultra's mouth and its exposed eye rolled back in its head. The large alien's dead body slumped to the side and lay there. Jackson took in all the air his lungs could hold and coughed hard, sending spittle and glut flying out of his mouth and sticking to the inside of his visor. Jackson looked over to where Sil was to find she was face down in the snow, "Sil" he gasped as he got to his feet forgetting, about the pain he was in and ran over to Sil's prone form. "Sil, can you hear me Sil?" He fell to one knee and rolled her over on to her back. She was still breathing, to Jackson's relief, but she was injured and her face had the first signs of frostbite. From the readouts on his HUD, Sil's core temperature was unstable. If he didn't get her to some cover she would go into hypothermic shock. Before Jackson could do anything, Sil's eyes shot open and she screamed, sitting up. Jackson took hold her as she kicked about "It's ok, its just me. Shhh, clam down, that's it." Jackson did what he used to do when Sil was 7 years old, when she woke screaming after having a nightmare. He held her tight in his arms and rocked her back and forth, humming a tune he learned back at Spartan camp. It seemed to work, she stopped struggling and started to take deep breaths. She was also crying out. From pain, joy, terror, maybe all of them, he wasn't certain. What he was certain about, was that she was alive and kicking, and that's all the joy he needed.

"What happened?" Sil said through her sobs "Is it dead? Did I kill it?"

"Yes its dead, you did" Sil looked up and stared at him with her green eyes, all glazed over with her tears.

"What was it?" she asked.

Jackson didn't answer and said instead "I need to get you back to the ship".

Sil seemed to wake up at that, "Are you kidding me? We can't go back." Sil struggled to get to her feet, wincing in pain. "We've come too far to turn back now."

Jackson supported Sil by letting her lean on him and said, "This job isn't worth risking your life for, I won't allow it. And you're hurt".

Sil shook him off, wobbling a bit before steadying herself. "You're hurt too, so don't give me that crap." She bent over and picked up her scarf and goggles, adding to her point, "And you said its not far now, which means we're too far from the ship anyway." She put her goggles and scarf back on, wincing when she touched her jaws and said "Ok 300 meters sounds good, so lets go." She took one step and fell, face planting the snow.

"I see you've made up your mind" Jackson said sighing "And you've got

a point, the ship is too far to reach in our state." Jackson helped Sil back on her feet, brushing all the snow off her. "But we need to patch each other up first and dig up our still working weapons" Sil nodded, and with more careful steps she and her uncle got to finding their weapons.

About an hour later Jackson and Sil had gathered their equipment and patched up their wounds with some simple bandages. They didn't dare use bio-foam in this cold. Jackson had discarded his assault rifle due to the fact it had been cut in half after he did his little counter move. But still, he had his sword back, hanging off his belt. Sil kept saying her legs were numb, so Jackson had taken a portable tent with him and had set it up so she could get out of the blizzard and recover. Before Jackson joined Sil in the tent, he went and checked the bodies to see if he could figure out what was going on. The body of the Keg Yar was a complete mess. The blade of the Ultra had cut it in a way where it simply blew the poor alien into two misshapen parts. The Keg Yar's equipment and the fact the Ultra had killed him, told Jackson this wasn't an act of disobedience or dutiful punishment. "This Keg Yar isn't a part of the covenant, so he must have been already here on this planet." Jackson thought to himself as he searched through what was left of the body. He then came across a nametag and the name of a company. "Chocra, so that's your name." The next name reminded him of a person he hated so very much. "So you're also in contact with Kala Van, wonderful, just wonderful." Jackson got up and went over to the body of the Sangheili Ultra. The Ultra was in better shape than the Keg Yar, so it wasn't so hard to see what he had. Jackson took a look at the arrow embedded in the Ultra's neck. "Clean kill, the arrow must have broke his vertebra." If Sil had not killed the Ultra instantly it would have cut his arm off. "Well I guess I still got some luck left after all." He checked the Ultra for anything else and found what made it invisible, a portable cloaking device. He knew what he was going to use this for. Jackson pulled out the arrow and went back to the tent he had made for Sil. Inside he found Sil sleeping. "The fight must have taken a lot out of her," he thought sitting down beside her, careful not to wake her. Jackson flipped the seals on his helmet and took it off taking in for the first time, Vinishia's cold air.

"Oh, uh" Sil groaned when she started sitting up. Jackson had just finished cleaning his helmet. "How long have I been sleeping for?" Sil said rubbing her bruised jaws, sitting cross-legged.

"For about an hour. Do you still feel up to continuing? Because there's more where that Ultra came from."

Sil ignored his question and asked her own. "You know what that thing was?" Sil said with a suspicious look in her eye. "I want to know how you know so much about that thing."

Jackson knew Sil was going to ask him this, so he did his best to tell her. "I've fought things like that before. Before your family died and I took you in, I used to fight aliens like that one outside andâ€|"

Sil cut him off and said, "I know you were some kind of war hero, but that's not what I'm asking." Sil brought up her arm and pointed at the tent flaps. "I want to know what species that alien is outside."

Jackson didn't want to tell her, but he had no choice, she would find out anyway and it was better if he told her now. "It was a Sangheili. The words hung in the air and he almost immediately regretted them.

"What?!" Sil said in disbelief, her eyes going wide in horror. "You mean to tell me I killed one of my own kind?" Sil put one of her hands on her head as she tried to take it all in.

"I'm sorry, Sil." Jackson said, lowering his gaze to the floor. "I never wanted you to meet your own kind in this way."

"It doesn't matter" Sil said catching Jackson by surprise, "He tried to kill you, and me, so it doesn't matter. It was either him or you, so why should I care if he was my own kind?" Sil looked at Jackson and continued, "But I got to ask, why did he hesitate? I mean he had me on the ground and he just stood there."

Jackson put a hand on his chin and offered, "Maybe it was because he realised you were a woman?"

Sil looked at him, unimpressed. "Really, that's the best you can come up with?"

"No really, in Sangheili culture it's the males that do all the fighting." Jackson pointed at Sil "So when he knocked off your goggles and scarf, he saw you were a woman of the same species, so he hesitated."

Sil still didn't look impressed but she at least dropped the matter, for now. "Well ok. But seriously he didn't kill me cause I am a WOMAN?"

"Hey, your guess is as good as mine." Jackson had taken some ration packs with him, so he gave one to Sil. "Tastes like shit, but it'll fill you up quick. Go on, eat up."

They ate what they could, and when they were done eating, they went outside and got to wrapping up the tent.

**\*\*Location: Alpha base 500 meters below Vinishia's surface.\*\***

**\*\*Three hours earlier. \*\***

**\*\*Neaola Roscal\*\***

Neaola was sitting behind a hastily made barricade with a human turret placed on top. The Keg Yar at the controls was doing a good job so far, mowing down anything that dared try and breach their barricade. "Damn it, how did they find us?" Neaola spat as she took aim with her patchwork beam rifle, and shot one grunt's heads into a million pieces, continuing through its back pack and into another's chest.

"Maybe that ship you sent out got captured and told them where we are?" Chackrol suggested, also sitting beside Neaola.

"Damn, you really think so?" came the reply of one Keg Yar who had ducked for cover.

"Aaaaa, it's a possibility" Neaola admitted with a scowl. "If so, this is my fault. Its my fault they're here, killing us."

Chackrol put a hand on Neaola's shoulder and argued, "This is not your fault. How were you supposed to know something like this was going to happen?"

Before she could answer, a wave of suicide Ungoe wielding plasma grenades and yelling something about a Nipple Clan, came charging down the tunnel and right for their barricade. The Keg Yar on the turret shot grunt after grunt as their bodies piled on top of one another. No matter how many he shot, it did not stop the sea of grenades exploding and raining heat, plasma, bits of ice and metal in their direction.

Neaola, Chackrol and anyone else under cover were unharmed by the explosion, but the Keg Yar on the turret wasn't so lucky. The shockwave sent the gunner flying hard into a nearby wall, killing him instantly.

"Shit!" Neaola swore gripping her beam rifle harder "Is there no end to this insanity?" As if to confirm her fears, she heard a Sangheili war cry coming down the tunnel.

"You need to go, NOW!" Chackrol started grabbing Neaola and another surviving Keg Yar. He dragged them to a ladder that led up to a catwalk, and from there to a higher level.

"What are you doing?" Neaola demanded struggling in his arms. "You can't take them all by yourself."

"I'll be fine, you just get out of this level, find your father, and get to the surface."

"Are you crazy?" Neaola shouted as Chackrol placed her on the ladder "I'm not leaving you to die."

"I'm not going to argue with you," he said putting the other Keg Yar down "Please go, NOW!"

"I'm not goi.." Chackrol cut her off by putting a finger on her mouth.

"Please don't make this harder for me, Neaola" he pleaded, "I can't stand the thought of you dying here."

"But what if we never see each other again?" she said softly, one tear running down her face.

"We will" Chackrol promised, "I'm not planning on dying today, you can count on that. NOW GO!"

**\*\*Chackrol Roscal\*\***

Chackrol watched as his wife and the other surviving Keg Yar climbed the ladder to the catwalks above. But they were going too slow. "Damn, I need to buy them some time." Chackrol looked for anything he could use, and then it came to him "The turret!" he thought, "That should work". He ran over to the turret and saw it was still intact.

He grabbed it and tore it off its metal supports, now wielding it like a mine gun. "Alright" he thought, "Come and get it."

Soon enough a wave of Sangheili warriors in their classic blue armour, came charging down the tunnel. He unleashed hell upon them with his powerful turret, cutting them down one by one. A few shots hit his steel grey plating, but it didn't slow him down. He kept up the stream of bullets, not letting a signal one live.

Click.

Chackrol's eyes went wide as he realised the gun was empty. He threw the heavy gun at one Sangheili, knocking him over, and ducked under the blade of another. In a compartment of his robotic arm, the hilt of his own energy sword flew into his grasp and ignited. The blade came to life with a brilliant flash of light, and in one move cut the head off his attacker. More came, surrounding him from all sides. One at a time they lunged at him and every time he cut them down. This didn't last long. A bigger Sangheili kicked his chest, knocking him to the ground and bring its heavy boot down on his robot arm, breaking the casing and damaging the gears. The larger Sangheili was about to finish him when a voice said "Enough."

"What, that's it?" Chackrol laughed as the big Sangheili backed off "That all you got?"

Another Sangheili kicked him in the face, bringing stars before his eyes. Two more dragged him to his feet and held him there as a Sangheili, in gold commander armour, walked up and stood in front of him.

"You look filthy, brother," said the gold Sangheili, a hint of disgust in his tone. "What brought you so low to make you fight for these rats?"

Chackrol smiled, saying "Oh, I don't know. Maybe I got sick of taking orders from cowards like YOU."

One of the Sangheili holding him punched his stomach, hard enough to wind him. "You're going to regret those words heretic," the one who punched him growled.

Chackrol laughed, "Don't you get it? There are no gods. Why do you all waste your lives for something that isn't real?"

"Oh, they're real" the gold Sangheili said "But before I send you to them, you're going to tell me what you're doing down here."

Chackrol spat in his face and one of the Sangheili holding him turned his blade on. But before he could use it, a beam of energy struck the Sangheili's head, killing him instantly.

Chackrol looked up and saw Neaola with her smoking beam rifle "No Neaola, get out of here NOW!" he shouted as the still standing Sangheili put an arm around his throat, and started dragging him away.



**\*\* Chapter 4: New Friends\*\***

**\*\*Location: 80 meters from Alpha Base. (AKA Demon Spear)\*\***

**\*\*4 hours later.\*\***

**\*\*Jackson 001\*\***

"Yep, that's our waypoint alright" Jackson confirmed with Sil. They were still a good distance away but they could now make out the jagged tips of a mountain made completely of ice. In some ways, it looked as if a massive wave had frozen suddenly before it could crash back down to earth, hanging high in the sky.

"Do you see any of those Ultra things?" Sil asked standing beside Jackson.

It was at this point Jackson wished he had brought the sniper with him, but he wasn't about to say that to Sil. He'd never hear the end of it. What he did say was "Ok, let's take a closer look".

Jackson eyed an icon on his HUD, and a second later his field of view had zoomed in on his waypoint. Now that he was able to see, he could make out that at the bottom of the mountain was some sort of landing platform, held up by metal stands, and there was movement on it.

"No, thankfully there's no Ultras, but there is a Sangheili Minor patrolling on some sort of landing platform" Jackson said to Sil.

"Told you we should have brought the sniper" Sil remarked, leaning on him and reaching up patting his helmet.

Jackson just grumbled in his throat as he came up with a plan. "Well since we don't have the sniper, we're going to have to improvise."

Sil had pulled her scarf down and he could now see her expression. Puzzlement. The way she put her jaws together and pulled one lip up, communicated her thoughts on Jackson's plan wordlessly. "How are we going to get there without being seen?" Sil pointed out, scratching her chin with one claw.

Jackson smiled under his helmet as he put a hand in his backpack and pulled out the portable cloaking device.

"This is how we get there unseen," Jackson said pointing at the device.

"What is it?" Sil said, pushing up one lens of her goggles to see the device better.

"This" Jackson continued, spinning the device in his hand "is what the Ultra used to go invisible."

He pushed a button and vanished. Sil had a surprised look on her face as she tried to see him.

"Uncle! Where did you go?" Jackson pushed the button again and appeared on the other side of Sil.

"Boo" Jackson said.

"OH!" Sil yelped, hitting him on his right shoulder "Don't do that."

Jackson chuckled and said "Sorry, I couldn't help it."

Now more serious he continued "Ok if I'm right, when I hold on to you it should cloak you as well."

"You even sure it works that way?" Sil asked, not looking very convinced.

"Well, not really. But in theory if we hold each other when I push this button, we both should go invisible."

"Well, okâ€¦" Sil answered taking hold of Jackson's arm.

Jackson got ready to run "Ok, don't let go, you hear me?"

Sil nodded and with that Jackson pushed the button and they both vanished.

"50 meters to go" Jackson yelled not slowing down, the landing platform was getting closer. Suddenly the invisible field started flashing "Oh on!" Jackson said in alarm "It's running out of power." If they didn't get to cover soon, the patrolling sniper would spot them.

More and more, the field weakened making them more visible "We're not going to make it!" Sil shouted still holding on to Jackson's arm.

"We'll make it" Jackson added, as the field got weaker.

40m. 30m. 20m. Maybe they were going to make it. Without warning, the field went dead "Fuck" Jackson swore, "Split up NOW!"

Jackson gave Sil the device and ran the other way. The sniper spotted them and tried to take aim, but they kept him off track. Beams of energy sizzled past Jackson's head, narrowly missing him. Sil was now out of sight, so Jackson had no way of knowing where she was. Jackson made it to the bottom of the platform, but not before taking a beam to the chest, making him fall over. "Ow, that hurt" Jackson spat, now really pissed off, he got back up and saw some make-shift stairs leading up to the landing pad. Jackson sneaked up the stairs and poked his head up to see where the Sangheili sniper was. Almost immediately, a beam went past his head, he ran for a crate and hid behind it.

"Where the hell is Sil?" Jackson thought pulling out his magnum and sword. He waited for the sniper to get close before leaping out, firing his magnum into the sniper's face. The sniper started staggering back, dropping his beam rifle and trying to go for his blade. Jackson took two quick steps and thrust his sword through the Sangheili's stomach. The Sangheili's eyes went wide with shock as he looked into Jackson's tinted gold visor, coughing up purple blood.

With a twist of his wrist Jackson pulled out his sword and let the Sangheili crumple to the floor, his lifeblood pooling all around him.

Jackson felt something hit off his shield and turned to see another Sangheili in blue armour charging at him with a plasma repeater. Jackson dove for cover as his shields burst from the overwhelming fire, he could feel the heat of his burns as he took a few hits. "Damn" he cursed, "This armour isn't easy to fix, you bastard." The Sangheili moved closer shooting the corner of the crate so as not to let Jackson move.

Suddenly, out of nowhere, an arrow came and hit the blue Sangheili in the back making him stumble. The Sangheili, with a look of shock, started jerking violently as electric waves went through his body. Jackson charged from his cover and stabbed the Sangheili in the mouth, causing him to freeze up and then go limp.

Jackson pulled his sword out the dead body's mouth and let it fall to the floor. He then looked up to see Sil appear with her bow in hand, "Nice shot" Jackson said, a little out of breath as he picked up the plasma repeater "That cloak is useful aint it."

"You can say that again," Sil said, not looking at the bodies. "Can we go inside now?"

Inside there was an eerie silence, and Jackson wasn't picking up anything on the radar. They passed a pile of fur coats and other winter clothing as they made their way down the tunnel. Sil chose that moment to take off her winter coat and goggles and left them with the pile.

"That's better" Sil said with relief. "I was starting to cook in that coat."

"Stay sharp" Jackson reminded her, "We still need to go through the rest of these bastards."

A few meters down, they came across the bodies of Keg Yar workers, it looked like they died whilst still working, juggling by the tools lying about their bodies. "Poor guys" Sil said sadly. "They were just doing their jobs. Why did they kill them?"

"'Cause, Sil" Jackson let some anger slip into his tone "They're monsters and kill because they feel like. So I'm going to put some plasma in their heads."

**\*\*Location: 200 meters below the planets surface.\*\***

**\*\*Three hours later. \*\***

**\*\*Sil\*\***

Sil and her uncle had gone through a lot of Ungoe infantry before coming to a large blast door that was sealed.

"Can you open it?" Sil asked

"I think soâ€¦" uncle Jack said not sounding too convinced. "The controls have been damaged by an explosion, but I think I can do a

bypass."

Sil watched the tunnel they had come down, just in case some grunts, as uncle jack called them, came running down to attack them.

"Ok, I think I got it." As he said that, the door started screeching open, and the stench that came through the cracks assaulted Sil's nose.

"Oh my god!" Sil said putting her scarf on her nose "What is that, smell?!"

Sil's uncle couldn't smell this foul odour because of his helmet, and now she wanted a helmet because the air in the room now smelled like a room full of Ungoe after a night of inhaling cheap drugs.

Sil had to put her bow away and take out her side arm so she could shoot and cover her nose simultaneously. The room was full of dead Keg Yar, Ungoe and Sangheili, whose bodies were burned all over. "Plasma grenades" Sil's uncle pointed out "And it looks like someone used a lot of them."

"I think I'm goingâ€¦ to be sick" Sil grumbled clutching her stomach, Sil's boots bumped off the leg of a Keg Yar body and to her horror it cried out in pain. "Holy sleva WHAT THE FOUK!" the last word, Sil always had trouble pronouncing.

The Keg Yar coughed blood out of his mouth and looked at Sil "Jesus he's still alive" Sil's uncle said in disbelief.

"You're notâ€¦. You're not them?" the old Keg Yar wheezed, holding his belly with one hand. One of his legs was missing, as was one of his eyes. "Thank the gods."

Still shocked, Sil bent down on one knee and tried to talk to him "What happened to you?" Sil asked her hands hovering over him, unsure what to do.

The old Keg Yar laughed, spitting blood in the direction of the Sangheili bodies. "I used all the plasma grenades." He coughed. "It seemed like a goodâ€¦ idea at the time."

Sil took a look at his wounds. "Maybe we can patch you up, we've got bio-foam."

The old Keg Yar grabbed Sil by her collar and pulled her closer. "Listen, I don't have much timeâ€¦. Find Ne.." He was starting to drift off.

"HEY!" Sil yelled trying to keep him awake. "Find whom?!"

His eyelid was getting heavy and his voice was a whisper. "Find Neolaâ€¦ tellâ€¦. tell her, her old man went out fighting." His breathing became shallow and slowly he slumped to one side.

"Hey, HEY!" Sil shouted trying to help him, but her uncle took her by the arm and pulled her to her feet. "What are you doing? He's dying!" Sil screamed trying to shake free.

"He's already gone Sil," her uncle said in a calm voice "There's

nothing we can do."

"I'm going to kill these MONSTERS" Sil screamed, her rage overflowing. "What did they do to deserve this? Why, what's the need for it?"

Sil felt her uncles arms around her as he tried to calm her down, "Tell me uncle, tell me why they had to die?" she said, breathing more steadily now.

"There is no reason for it" Sil's uncle said in a sad tone. "This is evil and no matter how much we try people always die because of it" he turned her around and added "That's why we make sure he didn't die for nothing. Ok?"

Sil looked at her uncle, now with a new fire in her green eyes. "Ok lets go find this Neaola."

**\*\*Location: 500 meters below the planet's surface.\*\***

**\*\*Chackrol Roscal\*\***

Chackrol had been interrogated for hours now, and he still wasn't giving in. "Come on, you shame your mother with that punch." Again, his interrogator punched him in the stomach, winding him.

"You better talk soon, before I start losing my temper," the interrogator snarled.

Chackrol just laughed, "Aw, just when I thought we were getting along."

"My, my, you are a brave one" came a rumbling voice.

Chackrol looked up to see the newcomer, a Sangheili in big silver armour, lined with blue and gold markings, came walking in and stood a respectful 2 meters away from Chackrol, who was pinned to the wall by gravity clamps. "And you are?" Chackrol asked mockingly. The interrogator was about to hit him, but the silver Sangheili stopped him.

"Go, your services are no longer necessary." With that, the smaller Sangheili left and it was just the two of them now. The silver Sangheili nodded and said "My name is Ship Master Ral 'm' Hondow, the new leader of the Storm" he continued. "My scouts found a Keg Yar vessel coming and going from the dead planet, Harvest. We captured that ship but sadly the crew died refusing to tell us the truth." He smiled "But they forgot to wipe their slip space data and with that, it led us here."

"And now you want me to tell you everything?" Chackrol sneered, "Well, Ral I'm not sorry to say this but, you should shove a stick up your ass" he finished, smiling.

Ral didn't even flinch. In fact, he seemed rather amused "Ha, so that means you don't mind if I bring your Keg Yar friend down here and ask her?"

Chackrol pulled on his clamps, his rage boiling over "Don't you touch her, you monster."

"Ah so, you do have feelings for her" Ral smiled again "Thanks for confirming that."

Chackrol's jaws were wide open now in shock. He had been baited, and he fell right into it "Leave her alone she has nothing to do with this."

"Then tell me what it is you're doing down here, and I'll order my men to stop hunting her."

Chackrol smiled at that bit of leaked info "As long as she's fighting back, I'll never tell you what's going on here."

Ral leaned closer and said with evil in his eyes, "Then she better fight hard if that's what keeps you from talking." He also added, "Keep in mind, I'm not going to go easy on her, she'll give up soon enough."

Chackrol kept his smile saying "Good, she'd hate it if you did."

**\*\*Location: 325 meters below the planet's surface\*\***

**\*\*Jackson 001\*\***

"I have no idea anymore." Jackson and Sil had been going through tunnel after tunnel, and somehow managed to get two Grunts to follow them because Sil couldn't bring herself to let Jackson kill them. "How are your new friends back there?" Jackson said not bothering to look.

"They're doing fine, no thanks to you. They're still a little shaken." Sil sarcastically replied.

Jackson stopped and in annoyance, turned around, and faced Sil and her merry Muppets, the Grunts. Both Grunts had the same armour but different colours, one had orange and the other had dark green. Their names were Flip Yum, the orange one, and Nip Nap the dark green one. They had decided instead of dying, they would join Jackson and Sil to help out. Jackson just wanted to shoot them. He already had one Grunt on his ship. He didn't need another two.

"Are we seriously going to bring them along?" Jackson asked bitterly.

"Yes" was Sil's answer. "Like you said, there's no reason for needless killing and besides, they're so cute." The last part she said in an adoring voice.

The grunts just looked at each other awkwardly. "Um Nip would like to say something" he shuffled up to Jackson fell on his knees and started begging "OH please mighty one let us live, we promise to serve you."

Jackson just leaned his head back and gestured for Nip Nap to get up "Please for the love of your gods, stop begging."

Nip Nap got up and looked embarrassed "Sorry."

"Justâ€¦ can we just get moving?" All this stress was getting to Jackson, and the Grunts were far from helpful. They were about to continue, when the sounds of gunfire and plasma shots came echoing down the tunnel.

"Everyone, take cover!" Jackson ordered, taking a spot behind some crates.

Sil and the two Grunts took spots behind some barrels and a few more crates. "What you think they are?" Flip Yum asked, pulling out his plasma pistol.

"We'll just have to find out," Sil answered, taking aim with her magnum.

"No one shoot till I say so," Jackson ordered, taking aim with his new plasma repeater.

They waited for any sign of movement down the dark tunnel, the atmosphere was getting tense and Jackson was worried one of the Grunts would lose their nerve. Jackson heard three pairs of footsteps running in their direction. "Get ready!" Jackson called, his hands gripping his gun harder. From the darkness, a Keg Yar female with a patchy beam rifle and two males with old human weapons emerged. The three stopped right in front of Jackson, Sil and her merry Muppets, with a look of shock on their faces.

"A human?" the female said in disbelief "But?"

"Get down!" Jackson shouted, and all at once they hit the ground. Jackson and Sil with her Grunts opened fire on the mass of Sangheili right behind the Keg Yar. One by one, the Sangheili kill team fell to the ground, dead.

The female got to her feet and started screaming at Jackson "WHAT ARE YOU THINKING!? Give us a little more warning next time, before you start shooting over our heads."

"You're welcome" Jackson said in a flat tone. "We're here because your boss wanted me and my crew to do something forâ€¦ someone."

The female just glared at him with her bright blue eyes, saying "I don't give a flying slewa what you're here for, my husband needs my help andâ€¦"

"Is your nameâ€¦ Neaola?" Sil interrupted.

Jackson watched as the female turned her attention to Sil for the first time and said in a low tone "How do you know my name?" Neaola walked slowly up to Sil and took a good look at her.

**\*\*Sil\*\***

"Oh umâ€¦ well, uh you seeâ€¦" Sil's stomach was tying itself in knots now, making it harder for her to speak.

"Well Sangheili, spit it out already," Neaola said harshly.

"Hey, don't speak to her like.." Sil cut her uncle off.

"No uncle." Sil said putting up a hand, "It's ok." Sil steeled herself for what she was about to say. "Neaola, I'm so sorry butâ€¦. Your father is dead."

The look on Neaola's face almost made Sil regret those last words.

"He's dead?" Neaola finally said her voice a little shaky.

"Really?" one of the other Keg Yar said, "I thought nothing could kill that old man."

Sil watched as Neaola's expression changed from shock to grief and finally anger. "Did he die fighting?" Neaola asked looking straight at Sil, hate burning in her eyes.

"Yes, he did" Sil said mournfully. She tried to put a hand on her shoulder, but Neaola just shook it off.

"Don't touch me," Neaola growled showing her sharp teeth.

Sil got the message and backed away "Sorry, I won't."

Sil's uncle stepped in at that point. "Look we're sorry for your loss. But you said something about your husband?"

Neaola's eyes went wide at the word husband. "Yes, my husband he needs help." She pointed at Sil's uncle "And you're the one who's going to help me."

"How are you even sure he's still alive? I mean Keg Yar are tough but..."

Neaola cut him off "He's not a Keg Yar," she spat "He's a Sangheili."

## 5. Chapter 5

**\*\*Chapter 5: The Dark one\*\***

**\*\*Location: 500 meters below the planet's surface in the drilling chamber.\*\***

**\*\*Ral'm'Hondow\*\***

"Why are we keeping that heretic alive, Ship Master?" Cano asked emphatically, pacing back and forth, his heavy gold armour clanking off the ground as he let out his frustration. "He has shamed himself beyond redemption."

While Cano ranted, Ral stood perfectly still, hands clasped behind his back, feet apart and head held high watching Cano vent.

"Yes, it is true what say about him being shamed" Ral finally answered, adding "But he has information that I would very much like to have. And killing him is impractical."

Cano stopped pacing and turned to face Ral. "If its info you want, then why haven't you beaten it out of him?" Cano finished, tensing up



his shoulders and tightening his jaws.

"That method has already been used. He is too strong willed to be broken that way." Ral brought up his armoured hand and started scratching his chin, adding "And he seems to enjoy the physical punishment."

Cano crossed his armoured arms across his chest plate and pondered "If not physicalâ€¦ then what?"

It was Ral's turn to start pacing, keeping his right hand on his chin and his left under his right elbow. He paced, slow and calm, bringing his thoughts to life. "I have a suspicion that he has some sort of a relationship with one of the Keg Yar." Ral started gesturing as he spoke. "He went into an outrage when I threatened his female Keg Yar friend. Which leads me to believe that's where his weakness lies."

Cano put a hand on his chin and looked like he was in deep thought. "That explains why the Keg Yar female shot one of the Sangheili holding him. He had pulled out his blade after the heretic spat in my face and as soon as he did that, the female killed him as if in fear of the heretic getting hurt." Cano also added "The heretic seemed rather angry after that, shouting the nameâ€¦Neaola."

Ral stopped pacing and faced his friend, rather pleased. "You have done well Cano, your information has filled in the gaps. Now we just need to find thisâ€¦Neaola."

"My Sangheili kill team was sent to find this Keg Yar, they haven't called in yet," Cano said.

Ral didn't like the sound of that. "They haven't called in? Well then, this means I'm going to have to send out one of the Spec Ops to see what has happened to the kill team." Ral spoke into a speaker on his wrist and said, "This is Ship Master Ral calling Specialist Vam'm'Ranal."

After a few seconds a deep shallow voice came through. "This is Vam, what is thy bidding Ship Master?"

"I have a task worthy of one with your skills" Ral smiled "I need you to hunt down and capture a Keg Yar female named Neaola. It is imperative you bring her to me alive, this mission depends on it."

"Your will is my command, Ship Master."

\*\*Location: 358 meters below the planet's surface in the dark tunnels.\*\*

\*\*Jackson 001\*\*

Jackson let Neaola take the lead since she knew this place better than he did. It was dark in the tunnel they were going down, so Jackson had to turn on his helmet's headlights so he didn't trip over tools or dead bodies. The light bouncing off of the icy walls made it feel eerie. Sil had also brought a hand held torch with her, and kept it pointed at her brown leather boots so she didn't trip up. The Keg Yar on the other hand didn't need lights to see. Their large eyes

were perfectly adapted to low light environments, so at least they could see what was up ahead. The two Grunts, Flip Yum and Nip Nap, where in the middle of the group having some sort of conversation in they're own kind's language, while Jackson and Sil took up the rear. Jackson was worried about Sil. She had been quiet ever since they ran into Neaola and broke the bad news about her father's death.

"Are you ok Sil?" Jackson asked, seeing the depressed look on her face.

"Huhâ€|Oh yeah, I'm fine" was Sil's reply, still looking at the icy floor.

"No you're not fine" Jackson stated, as he gestured in Sil's direction. "You've been like this ever since you told Neaola of her father's death. So don't tell me you're just fine."

"What do you want me to say?" Sil demanded, her four jaws tight with anger. "Should I say I'm completely thrilled that I told someone their father is dead?"

"No, that's not what I mean." Jackson stepped in front of Sil and stopped her from going further. "I mean you shouldn't feel bad for telling someone the truth, even if it's a bad truth. Stop doing this to yourself Sil, it's not your fault."

Jackson saw Sil let a single tear fall down her cheek. "What would I do without you here to comfort me?" she said, smiling just a little as she looked at him.

"Well" Jackson said wiping the tear away with his gloved thumb, "You'd be a puddle on the floor with the amount you're crying."

He was about to say more when he heard Neaola calling him. "HUMAN, ARE YOU COMING OR NOT?" her voice echoed down the tunnel.

Jackson and Sil caught up with Neaola and her two Keg Yar followers, who's names he hadn't heard yet, and the two Grunts. "Are you two done talking?" Neaola sneered "Or were you kissing? I couldn't tell."

Jackson saw a look of disgust flash across Sil's face. "Eeeew no, he's my uncle, not myâ€| Boyfriend!"

Neaola looked shocked "Ohâ€| Wellâ€| that explains a bit." The other two Keg Yar chuckled to themselves at this awkward conversion. "And what are you two laughing at?" Neaola spat, showing her teeth.

The two Keg Yar just shrugged and one of them said "Sorry boss it's just been a long time since we had these sort of conversions."

Rolling her eyes, Neaola waved her hand and was about to start walking when Jackson grabbed her shoulder and stopped her. "Hey what are youâ€|?"

Jackson put a finger to his helmet where his mouth would be, as a signal to stop talking. The group went silent as Jackson turned his head slowly left and right looking for something in the dark. "We're not alone down here," he said in a whisper, moving up in front and

aiming his plasma repeater down the tunnel. He stood like that for a full 2 minutes before pulling out a flare and igniting it. He threw it down the tunnel, only for it to bounce off an invisible surface. Jackson only caught a glimpse as the invisible field flashed off and on. It was a Sangheili in black Spec Ops armour with red lenses in its helmet. Jackson open fire and hit nothing but air. "Shit!" Jackson thought. "Bastard's quick." Before Jackson could react, the invisible Sangheili slammed into him, knocking him to the ground. He rolled onto his stomach and fired a few shots in to the blur in the air. Jackson's shots were dead on as the force field surrounding the Sangheili vanished, revealing his full features. The Sangheili's long pointy helmet almost touched the ceiling, his arms, chest, and legs where covered in heavy black plating, his helmet's lenses were glowing blood red, and white religious markings covered his black armour. He wasn't armed with any weapons, but Jackson knew the Sangheili didn't need them. In one move he did a roundhouse kick, sending the group sprawling all over the place. Jackson watched Sil bring her gun up, only for it to be snatched out of her hand by the Sangheili, who then brought its open hand up and struck her in the chest, sending her tumbling head over heels. Then the two Grunts tried to tackle the Sangheili's legs, only for the two to be kicked off. The Sangheili then turned to face the Keg Yar, who were just starting to regain their balance. He lunged at the two males, disarming them and tripping them up again. Neaola brought up her own gun just as she got to her feet, only for the Sangheili to grab it and bend the barrel, rendering the gun useless. It shot out its open hand and grabbed her by the throat and held her in the air. This whole thing took less than 8 seconds.

"Are you Neaola?" came the deep rasping voice of the Sangheili.

"Who wantsâ€¦to know?" Neaola replied struggling in the strong grip of the Sangheili.

Jackson got to his feet and went to fire, but the big alien turned to face him using Neaola as a live shield. "Let her go." Jackson demanded looking behind the alien to see Sil laying on the floor unconscious.

The Sangheili moved forward, keeping Neaola in Jackson's line of fire. "I can not do as you ask human" came the rather pleasant reply.

"I'm not asking." Jackson countered. "I'm demanding you let her go."

The Sangheili moved past Jackson, now still keeping Neaola in line with his gun. "Even if I wanted to, I can not." There was something sad about the alien's tone, like he didn't want this but had no choice.

The Sangheili was way past Jackson now, heading back down the tunnel. Jackson watched as the Sangheili and Neaola went past the flare and vanished in the darkness.

**\*\*Location: 358 meters below the planet's surface in the dark tunnels.\*\***

**\*\*30 minutes later\*\***

**\*\*Sil\*\***

"Whatâ€¦happened?" Sil groaned as she came to. When her vision cleared, she met the faces of Flip and Nip looking down on her.

"You hit your head." Flip said "It look like it hurt."

Sil also noticed her head was lying on her uncle's backpack. She looked to the side and saw the two Keg Yar males were sitting on the floor and leaning against the wall. That's when she remembered the Sangheili. Sil sat up and tried to get to her feet when a hand came down on her shoulder and pushed her back down. "Hey, what are you doing?" Sil protested. "What happened to that Sangheili, and where is Neola?"

"Neola's gone Sil" came the voice of uncle Jack. "The Sangheili took her."

Sil looked to her other side to see uncle Jack sitting right next to her. "If that's true, how are we still alive?" To Sil's surprise no one was killed, in fact no one was badly injured either, a few bumps and bruises, but otherwise fine.

"No idea" her uncle replied. "At first I thought we got lucky, then I realised what happened was on purpose. That Sangheili was skilled enough to kill any of us and yet, he didn't kill anyone." He was now looking at Sil. "It just doesn't add up."

"Maybe" Sil offered, "He just didn't want to kill anyone. I mean he had reason to, but he didn't."

"Still" Sil's uncle said, "Why did he only take Neola?"

It was now one of the Keg Yar male's turns to speak "You want to know why he took her?" The male with a long scar down his reptile face and glowing blue spines on his head, peachy skin and red eyes, got to his feet and went over to stand in front of Sil and her uncle.

"And your name is?" uncle jack asked.

The male turned and looked at Sil's uncle and answered, "My name is Char, that one sitting there is Raskal" he also added "And I'd like it very much if you'd help me save my sister and her husband."

**\*\*Location: 500 meters below the planet's surface in the drilling chamber.\*\***

**\*\*1 hour later\*\***

**\*\*Chackrol Roscal\*\***

Chackrol watched in horror as a Sangheili in black armour walked in with Neola on his shoulder. "NO!" Chackrol screamed in rage at the Sangheili carrying his wife. Pulling at his clamps, wishing he could tear the Sangheili apart.

"Ah, specialist Ranal." Ral mocked in a cheerful voice, bring his hand up in greeting. "How nice of you to join us, and you brought the female."

The black armoured Sangheili put Neaola down, and to Chackrol's surprise she was unharmed. "Not a scratch, like you ordered, Ship Master." the Sanheili said in a deep shallow voice.

Ral took Neaola by the arm and dragged her over to Chackrol. "Neaola!" Chackrol called to his wife, "How did they get you?"

Neaola looked at him with a sad look in her blue eyes. "I'm sorry Chackrol," she said "I wasn't strong enough."

"Good." Ral sneered letting the evil fill his voice. "Now that greetings are aside, lets talk about what you're doing down here."

Chackrol didn't say a word as he glared at Ral. "Forget it" Chackrol spat.

"If you want to play it that way," Ral stated as he put his hand around Neaola's throat and started to apply pressure. "Then I'm happy to oblige."

"Stop!" Chackrol pleaded as Neaola started to choke, kicking her legs about in panic and clawing at Ral's armoured hand. "Stop!" he pleaded again, as Neaola started to move faster now, her chokes getting louder and her eyes rolling back in her head. "Stop, I'll tell you!" Ral released Neaola and let her crumple to the floor, she gasped as she breathed in air and started coughing violently as she lay on her back.

"I knew you would break." Ral chuckled, putting his hands behind his back. "Cano, I believe you wished for some pay back for the time Chackrol spat in your face."

Cano walked up beside Ral and brought a heavy boot down on Neaola's stomach causing her to cry out in immense pain. "You BASTARD!" Chackrol screamed in rage as Neaola writhed around in pain. "I said I'll tell you, stop hurting her."

Cano laughed as he watched Neaola clutch her stomach and curl up in a ball shape. "Ha! These rats are pathetic. It is disgusting to think you love one so much you 'd say anything just so we will stop hurting her."

He was about to kick her when the black armoured Sanheili blocked him. "That's enough" the Sanheili said staying in front of Cano.

"How dare you interfere!" Cano snarled, pulling the hilt of his energy blade out and held it. "You have no right to stop me."

Ral just looked amused as Cano raged. "He's right Cano, you 've made your point."

Cano look at Ral in rage. "But.."

Ral cut him off. "You've made your point, now leave."

Chackrol saw the murder in Ral's eyes as he said that. Cano took one

last look at Vam and then stormed off. "Take the female and put her with the other Keg Yar" Ral ordered.

"As you wish, Ship Master" Vam said, bowing. He gently scooped Neaola up and held her in his arms. He took one look at Chackrol and nodded before carrying Neaola away.

"Now then," Ral chuckled "Where were we?"

**\*\*Location:** 500 meters below the planet's surface out of the drilling chamber.**\*\***

**\*\*Neaola Roscal \*\***

Neaola was in so much pain, the spot that the gold Sangheili put his boot on felt like it was on fire. She felt lightheaded, but could see well enough to see the black Sangheili's head, his eyes glowing a deep red and white markings covered his helmet. "Why?" Neaola asked in a pained voice. "Why did you stop him?"

The armoured Sangheili looked left, then right, and then put Neaola down gently on the floor. He looked at her through his red lenses and whispered, "You're no longer needed by the Ship Master." He gave her a knife that was hidden in his armour and added, "I was never here, you broke out yourself, and the others as well."

Before Neaola could ask what the hell he was playing at, the Sangheili went invisible and quickly slipped away. "What the hell just happened?" Neaola said to herself, looking at the knife. It was small and jagged, with white markings on its hilt. Why did he give this to her, and why did he leave her here? It didn't matter, she was free and she needed a way to free Chackrol. Neaola got to her feet and winced as fresh pain shot through her stomach. "I wonder how much damage that gold bastard caused to my insides?" she thought, still holding her stomach.

She limped her way down one passage, peeked around a corner and saw a makeshift holding cell, full of Keg Yar. There was also a Sangheili guarding it, one of those blue bastards, and he looked tired. Neaola looked back the way she came and saw nothing, so she took the knife, blade down, and chipped a piece of ice out of the wall. "I just hope this works." Neaola thought as she looked around the corner again. The Sangheili wasn't looking so she chucked the piece of ice down the other tunnel and it made an echoing clatter. The Sangheili turned his head and started looking down the other tunnel. He also started walking the same way trying to see in the dark. Neaola moved quickly, despite the pain, and jumped on the Sangheili's back. She stabbed him 5 times in the neck before he toppled to the floor, his purple blood pooling around him. Neaola got to her feet, went over to the cell and found the rest of her Keg Yar kin.

"Neaola?" one of them said, getting up and moving to the bars. "What are you doing here? In fact how did you get here?"

Neaola looked for some sort of lock, but found nothing. "No time to explain. How do I get you out?"

The green skinned Keg Yar just shrugged. "Its welded shut, no way out."

Neaola thought hard. How was she going to get them out? "Oh" she thought looking at the dead Sanheili. "Energy sword, that'll work." Still clutching her stomach, she went over to the Sangheili's body and pulled out its energy sword. With that, she turned it on and went back to the bars.

"Ok, stand back." Neaola brought up the blade, and with two swings she cut the cell bars to pieces. "Ok, come on we need toâ€¦" More pain shot through Neaola's body, causing her to fall over, still holding her stomach.

"Neaola, what's wrong?!" The green skinned Keg Yar was over her now, trying to see if she had any wounds. "You have no wounds, so where does it hurt?"

"My stomach" she gasped in pain. "I don't know why but it hurts so much." Even though the gold Sangheili stood on her, she shouldn't be in this much pain.

While the green Keg Yar helped her, others spread out looking for something they could use as weapons. "Well, lucky for you I'm the doctor here, so lets take a look." The doctor put his hand on Neaola's stomach and started to feel for anything. When he got to her lower stomach she cried out, as pain shot through her body. "Oh my" the doctor gasped looking very worried "This wasn't what I expected?"

"What?" Neaola asked seeing the concern on the doctors face "Why are you looking at me like that?"

The doctor rubbed the back of his neck, looking lost for words. "Um how do I put this, in a way you wont freak out."

Neaola looked at him in confusion now, not getting where he was going with this. "What is it doc?!" she asked still on her back and looking at her stomach. "What's wrong?"

"Are you married to any one?" the doctor asked, getting on Neaola's nerves now.

"Why wouldâ€¦yes I amâ€¦why?" She was getting worried now "What are you telling me?"

The doctor put a hand on her shoulder, and said the words she never expected to hear. "Neaolaâ€¦ You're pregnant."

Neaola looked at him, her eyes wide and her mouth was slowly opening in shock. Then she finally screamed. "WHAT!"

## 6. Chapter 6

**\*\*Chapter 6: Improvised Plan\*\***

**\*\*Location: 500 meters below the planet's surface in service tunnel G out of holding cell.\*\***

**\*\*Neaola Roscal\*\***

"YOU MUST BE WRONG!" Neaola screamed at the doctor, not believing

what he said. "I can't beâ€|PREGNANT!"

The doctor stood up and helped Neaola to her feet, she winced as the doctor pulled her upright and let her lean on him for support. "I'm sorry Neaola but you are."

"How am I going to explain this to Chackrol? Well that's if I survive long enough to tell him." Neaola thought to herself as the doctor said something.

"You need some rest, what ever happened to you seems to have effected your egg sac. So lets get youâ€|"

Neaola shook her head and pushed the doctor away, wincing again. "There's no way I'm sitting this out, not when my husband needs me."

The doctor started looking concerned again and tried to reason with her. "There's no way you could effectively fight in your state, you'll only be a burden."

Neaola snarled at him "I'll be more of a burden sitting around doing nothing" she also added "And besides I've been through worse. I didn't go through an entire 25 years of war, just to be beaten by pregnancy. That would just be insulting."

The doctor just rolled his eyes and shook his head in annoyance, but he didn't try and talk her out of it anymore. "You are one stubborn woman. You know that?"

Neaola just laughed as she said "Yeah, that's just like what my husband tells me." More pain went through her body. It was getting worse. "Hey do you have any painkillers doc?"

The doctor crossed his arms and saying in an overly cheerful voice. "Oh sure, just let me pull out my med kit from under this conveniently placed block of ice."

Neaola just narrowed her eyes and frowned at him saying. "Oh ha ha, you're so funny. Do you want broken teeth?"

He just chuckled and said. "The medical room isn't far from here but the Sangheili have it locked up."

Neaola went over to the body of the Sangheili guard and picked up his weapon. It was an old needle rifle that had seen better days, but it would do the trick. Neaola checked its ammo. It was half empty. "Well," she clamped the rifle shut "Lets go get some medicine."

Before she could take a step the doctor said. "Maybe we should bring some help with us, just in case you pass out or something."

Still frowning she looked around and saw the rest of the Keg Yar who were collecting tools and mining equipment as weaponry. Then she had an idea. "Hey you lot, listen up" she called out pointing at each of them. They stopped and looked in her direction. "I just learned I've got a kid on the way and I have a headache. That means I need painkillers, and the only ones around are in the med area, which is crawling with those Sangheili bastards." Neaola lifted her rifle onto



her shoulder and added. "There's also a crate of old weapons in there too, so unless you like getting shot, you'll help me out." And with that she walked down the tunnel leading to the med area, and she was happy to see her Keg Yar kin were doing the same.

**\*\*Location: 500 meters below the planet's surface in drilling chamber.\*\***

**\*\* 15 minutes later\*\***

**\*\*Chackrol Roscal\*\***

"So" Ral said "You are telling me you have been mining down here for about a year looking for some forerunner structure 500 meters beneath the ice of this planet?"

"Yes" Chackrol whispered.

"And you're close to getting there?" Ral asked.

"Well" Chackrol sneered. "I would be if you bastards hadn't showed up."

Ral punched him in the stomach and unlocked the clamps holding him to the wall, letting Chackrol fall to the ground. "I would ask where you got this information but I don't have time, so you will show me your progress on this new tunnel." Ral stepped back and a Sangheili Ultra came and hauled Chackrol to his feet. Then the Ultra poked a standard plasma rifle in Chackrol's back, making him move forward. They went to the entrance of a freshly drilled out tunnel that was 10 meters long and 5 meters wide. "By all means, lead the way." Ral said not really asking.

Chackrol went first, with the Ultra behind him and Ral in the back. It only took them two minutes to reach the end of the tunnel, where a massive mining drill lay still and dormant. The thing was of human design, so it broke from time to time, and lucky for Chackrol the drill had broken down again and would stay that way for the foreseeable future. "It's behind this wall of ice." Chackrol said, eyeing over his shoulder at the Ultra who poked him as soon as he turned. "Such a shame the drill's out. Oh well, guess you can't get in then." Chackrol added, letting the sarcasm enter his voice.

For some reason Ral just smiled, and that actually scared Chackrol more than anything. "Well, there are other means of getting through a wall, and I know just what to do."

"What are you planning to do?" Chackrol asked, as his worry increased. He could easily overpower the Ultra, but Ral would get away and he'd be trapped at the bottom of this tunnel, so he thought better of it, at least for now. He'd keep his promise to Neola.

"Let's just say," smirked Ral, breaking Chackrol from his thoughts, "It has an explosive, result."

**\*\*Location: 470 meters below the planet's surface in the dark tunnels\*\***

**\*\*Jackson 001\*\***

"Wow that's a long time." Jackson said after Char had finished his story of how he and his family had funded this whole mining thing. "I must say, it's impressive how much of this you've done in one year. Once again the Keg Yar surprise me."

Char just shrugged, saying with a sheepish grin. "Well it's not just us, that Sangheili, Chackrol- the one my sister married, he's the one that made all this possible. For a Sangheili he's not that bad."

"How did he meet your sister?" Sil asked walking beside Jackson with her Grunt friends close behind.

"That's a question you'd be better asking Neaola, it's none of my business." Char stated looking over his shoulder.

The group reached the end of the tunnel and found that it split off in two directions. "Well shit" Jackson swore, as he looked down both tunnels "This could cause problems. Which way is the drilling chamber?"

Keg Yar didn't tend to leave signs up telling someone where to go. Char turned to face Jackson and simply said. "They both do."

No one could see Jackson expression, but it was one of surprise. "Wait, really?" he asked pointing in both ways. "Both lead to the drilling chamber?"

"Yes." Char answered, a pleased expression on his reptilian face. "I would have never thought of it, but Chackrol insisted we mine two tunnels in case one collapsed."

"That's some clever thinking." Jackson stated as he came up with a plan. "You know, this gives me an idea."

"Oh no." Sil said, putting a hand on her face. "Not another one of your plans."

"Trust me." Jackson said in a cheerful voice "This one will work."

Jackson had told them his plan after he got Char to give him some details on the chambers layout. Jackson, Char and Raskal would take the tunnel that lead to the bottom of the drilling chamber and Sil, Flip Yum and Nip Nap would take the one that lead to the catwalks above. "I don't know" Raskal stated, scratching his scaly chin. "This plan seems too simple."

"We'll improvise." Jackson said getting to his feet and checking his guns ammo. "Humans are good at that sort of thing."

"Just don't do anything stupid." Sil remarked. "You've already hurt yourself once. Try and be more careful this time."

Jackson turned to Sil and before she could react, he shot forward and put her in a headlock. "I could say the same for you pip squeak." He retorted as he ruffled up her hair.

"HEY! Stop it." Sil squirmed for a bit before Jackson let her go. She

rubbed her head and let her two bottom jaws drop down as if to say 'that's not funny'.

Jackson just chuckled at that and said. "You just stay safe, ok."

Sil brought her hand up and did a witty salute. "They won't even see me coming. Come on you two." She finished saying to the two Grunts and with that, Sil, Flip and Nip disappeared down the tunnel.

"Come on, let's go." Jackson said after a moment and they made their way down the passage.

After a while Jackson, Char and Raskal reached the bottom of the tunnel. Jackson saw the ground was a lot smoother and flatter than the other tunnels, and unlike the other tunnels, this one was lit up by some standard floodlights. There were crates along the tunnel so if they run into any Sangheili, they had enough to hide behind. "Ok" Jackson whispered "Keep your noise to a minimum, move out." The two males nodded and they moved down the tunnel, staying low and ready. Jackson bent low and moved forward keeping his eyes sharp, reading the motion tracker in his HUD for any hostiles. They reached a cut in the wall, making a second tunnel.

"That's the way to the drilling chamber." Char pointed out as he crept up beside Jackson. "That's where they have Chakrol and maybe Neaola too."

Jackson brought a hand up to his helmet and called Sil. "Sil where are you, are you there yet?"

A second later and Sil's voice came through "Not yet, why, you already there?"

"No not yet I'll keep you updated."

"So what was the plan again?" Raskal asked not sounding confident.

"Well" Jackson admitted, "That's the thing, I don't really have one yet."

"Oh, that's just wonderful, a human without a plan." Raskal said, seemingly frustrated at Jackson.

Jackson just ignored him and peeked around the corner to see a force field blocking the path. "Shit" Jackson swore under his breath. "This complicates things."

**\*\*Location: 480 meters below the planet's surface in the second tunnel leading to the drill chamber.\*\***

**\*\*38 minutes earlier\*\***

**\*\*Sil\*\***

Sil had been going down the tunnel for 30 minutes now and she was getting bored of Flip and Nip talking about some kind of cheese thing they were obsessed with. "Ohhh, for the love of god will you two shut up about cheese?!" Sil finally growled keeping her voice down so as

not to draw attention to them and alert any nearby hostiles.

"Sorry." Nip whispered.

"Yeah sorry." Flip whispered too.

Sil was about to apologise for getting angry, when her earpiece went off.

"Sil where are you, are you there yet?"

Sil put a hand on her ear and said. "Not yet, why, you already there?"

"No not yet, I'll keep you updated." Sil's uncle finished and went silent.

Sil looked at her two Grunts and said "Come on, let's go."

A few more meters and Sil, Flip and Nip reached the end of the tunnel. The tunnel ended in a curve and around the curve Sil spotted two blue-armoured Sangheili guarding an opening, which Sil assumed led to the drilling chamber's catwalks. One was leaning on the wall and looking at the ground, where the other was standing up straight but not looking in Sil's direction. Instead, he was looking in to the opening. Sil could hear them talking, but didn't understand what they were saying. They were speaking in a form of Sangheili she didn't recognise and even though Sil was Sangheili, she hadn't spoken her native tongue since she was six years old. Sil ducked back around the corner and spoke to Flip and Nip. "Ok we got two blue one just around the corner." Sil whispered. "I'm going to deal with them while you two stay here, got it." The two Grunts didn't argue with that and just nodded.

Sil brought up the cloaking device she had stuck to her wrist guard and pressed the button rending her invisible. Sil silently turned the corner and approached the two Sangheili who were still talking.

Sil got close enough that she could hear them clearly now and she was starting to recognise some of their speech.

"This cold slows me." The one leaning on the wall said rubbing his arms. "Why we even here?"

The one looking into the drilling chamber turned and looked at his friend saying in a tired voice. "I have no idea. Master Ral said it's important."

Sil had gotten close now, close enough to use her throwing knives. She was about to kill them both at the same time when the standing one said. "I just want to go home and see my wife again, just to see her face once more before I die."

The one leaning on the wall stood up and patted his friend on the shoulder saying. "Oh don't be like that, we be home soon enough you see."

Sil couldn't do it. She couldn't kill someone after hearing that it just felt wrong, but she had to get rid of them somehow. Just when

she thought it was impossible the two of them started to move away and went down some sort of ladder and were now gone. Sil let out a breath she didn't realise she was holding and let her hand drop away from her knives. "This is getting too tense." Sil thought to herself as she turned off her cloak. Sil looked back to see Flip and Nip poking their heads around the corner. She waved for them to come over and they did so, quickly hopping over to stand next to her.

"Why you no kill them?" Nip asked seeming puzzled.

"It doesn't matter now lets just get in the chamber" Sil stated, staying low as she moved forward.

Inside the drilling chamber Sil could now get in her head the actual size of the place. She was about 20 meters off the ground below, suspended by a metal catwalk covered in tools and crates. Sil moved up and hid behind a crate that let her see the entire room. There was a small amount of Sangheili in the chamber moving crates of weapons, making defences and some just milling about. What caught Sil's eye was a big Sangheili in gold armour standing at the side of a tunnel entrance, where several other Sangheili were coming out of, all in red armour. Then two more came out behind them and Sil could tell the one in the big silver armour with a rather large helmet, was the one in charge. But the other one was completely different, in fact he was the first Sangheili Sil had ever seen with out armour. Unlike Sil's skin, a tannish brown, his skin was a rocky grey and he was completely bald with black clothing. But what made him the most different was that the right side of his body was robotic.

"That must be Chackrol." Sil said pointing so Flip and Nip could see. "But where's Neaola?"

Before Sil could take another look her earpiece went off again "Sil we have a problem." It was her uncle.

"What kind of problem?" Sil replied.

"We're out side of the drilling chamber's main entrance but we're blocked by an energy shield."

Sil looked to the right of the room and saw a shield blocking the entrance. "Well lucky for you I'm already inside. So what do you need me to do?"

"Nothing yet. Tell me what's in there first?"

Sil took one more sweep of the room before speaking. "A lot of Sangheili, including Chackrol and two leader types."

"Can you tell me what they look like?" her uncle asked.

"One has big gold armour with a horn like helmet, and the other has bigger silver armour with a large crest shaped helmet." Sil described.

"Hhmm, ok you sit tight I'llâ€¦"

There was an explosion that shook the catwalk, almost making Sil fall over. "What the hell just happened!?" Sil's uncle demanded in alarm.

"I don't know I think they think they just blew up a tunnel."

As Sil regained her balance she watched as the Sangheili in red marched back down the tunnel they just came from. Sil also saw Chackrol being shoved forward by an Ultra with the silver Sangheili right behind.

"They're going in a tunnel and they're taking Chackrol with them." Sil said to her uncle as the last of the group disappeared and going to whatever they blew up.

"Who's left in the chamber?" Sil's uncle asked.

Sil saw there were some Sangheili still in the chamber. "Some blue ones and a white one." Sil also saw the gold one. "And the gold one is still here."

"Ok that's all I needed to know. Get ready to blow the shield when I say."

Sil took out her bow and attached an arrow. She flexed her injured arm and pulled back the string. "Ready when you are."

**\*\*Jackson 001\*\***

"Get ready to blow the shield when I say." Jackson took out two frag grenades and got ready. Jackson looked over his shoulder and saw Char and Raskal ready to go too.

"Ready when you are." Sil said through his helmets speakers.

"Do it."

Jackson heard an explosion and when he looked around the corner the shield was gone.

Jackson sprang from his squat position and rounded the corner. He threw the grenades at the Sangheili who were still confused at what had just happened and then dove for cover. The grenades went off with a loud bang. Shrapnel and body parts flew in all directions as the Sangheili went crazy. Char and Raskal charged in after the explosions and opened fired. Jackson took cover behind some crates as plasma bolts whizzed past him just skimming his shields. A Sangheili in Ultra armour charged at Jackson's cover with an energy sword in his hand, roaring as he ran at him. The Sangheili didn't get far as an arrow imbedded itself in the Sangheili's chest armour.

The Sangheili still standing, looked at the arrow as it started beeping. The Sangheili cried out in panic as he dropped the energy sword and tried to pull the arrow out. Too late, the Sangheili exploded into a purple mess as body parts flew everywhere. Jackson looked up and saw Sil already pulling back another arrow. Char and Raskal had gotten themselves pinned down behind some crates and the Sangheili were getting closer to them. Jackson was out of grenades so he called Sil "Sil give me some cover." He came out of cover and charged the Sangheili and it was only then did they actually see him. One of them cried out in English saying a single word Jackson had heard too many times in the past.

"DEMON! "

Jackson filled the Sangheili's face with plasma as he charged right into the group. Jackson flipped his gun in his hands used it like a club smacking one Sangheili so hard he sent him flying head over heels. Jackson threw his gun away, took one step back and backwards kicked another in the stomach, knocking the Sangheili to the ground. In the same move Jackson pulled his sword from its sheath and blocked the energy sword of a big gold Sangheili Sil had been talking about before. He jumped to the side as the gold Sangheili swung his sword at Jackson's face. Jackson came in with his own swings, pairing and blocking the gold ones own attacks. Jackson saw in his peripheral vision the other Sangheili holding back as they watched him and the gold one fight. Char and Raskal were still firing at two Sangheili who hadn't stopped to watch the gold one fight Jackson. This Sangheili was skilled Jackson had to give him that, every strike and block was perfectly controlled but he had a weakness, he was too impatient. He didn't pace himself and Jackson could tell he was losing his cool as his attacks became wilder and less controlled. Jackson spun and kicked the gold one in the face hard enough to make his energy shield flare. The gold Sangheili stumbled back and Jackson tried to finish him but the Sangheili holding back suddenly moved and blocked him from their leader. They all had their swords out now and were trying to cut Jackson apart. Jackson ducked and rolled out the way of one over eager Sangheili's clumsy swing, which instead cut one of his own allies heads off. As the young Sangheili stood in shock at what he'd done Jackson took the opportunity to drive his blade into the Sangheili's throat. The young Sangheili had no chance as Jackson's blade cut through his throat causing him to fall to the ground and writhe on his back as his blood flowed from his open wound. Two more came at Jackson at the same time and tried to overwhelm him. But one took an arrow to the face sending the Sangheili tumbling over. Now there was just one looking at Jackson with growing fear in his eyes as he realised he was going to die. Jackson slowly moved forward, purple blood dripping from his sword and his helmet's visor staring straight at the terrified Sangheili. The Sangheili was nothing but a kid, barley an adult and he was in the wrong place at the wrong time. The Sangheili dropped his blade and started to back away when another blade went through his back and out his chest. Jackson watched in horror as the gold Sangheili pulled his sword out of the young Sangheili's back and let him fall to the ground.

"Coward." The gold Sangheili spat. "Better off dead."

Jackson's anger was boiling now as looked at the dead Sangheili's body. "He was just a kid who wanted to live and you just killed him." Jackson shouted. "He was unarmed and you killed him. You're the coward." He spat pointing his sword at the gold Sangheili.

That made the gold Sangheili angry as he shot forward and once more they were locked in single combat.

**\*\*Sil\*\***

Sil had been doing well up to this point, her uncle had killed all but one of the Sangheili who was just standing scared out of his mind, and Sil couldn't blame him. Sil hoped her uncle would spare him but the gold Sangheili chose for him. Sil felt a ping of sadness as

she watched the poor Sangheili's body fall face down on the ground and lay still. Sil wanted to put an arrow in the gold ones face but he had already started fighting uncle Jack again and she didn't want to hit her uncle. But before she could wait for a clear shot Sil felt something hit off her shield. "Shit." She swore as she ducked behind her crate. Plasma bolts hit off her cover as Flip and Nip also in cover were now firing their plasma pistols at two Sangheili who had come up the ladder again. They were the same ones who were guarding the chamber's top entrance and now they were coming for her and the Grunts. Sil had to think of something quick before they came too close. She could go invisible but then they would go for Flip and Nip and she didn't want that. "Think Sil think." She muttered to herself as her panic increased. Sil spotted some rope and had an idea. She grabbed the bundle of rope and guessed it was long enough.

"You two." Sil called out to the two Grunts.

"Huh." One of them squeaked.

"Take this rope." Sil ordered as she tied the other end to the banister. "Ok now jump."

"WHAT!?" Nip and Flip said at the same time.

"I'm giving you the chance to save yourselves now go."

Flip and Nip just looked at her but didn't argue. Soon both of them zipped down the rope to the ground below. Sil went invisible just as the two Sangheili rounded the crates and went to fire. Sil dove in-between them and did a sweeping kick causing them to fall over. Sil then kicked their weapons out of their grips sending them over the edge and to the ground below. One of them swung his arm at Sil's invisible leg, causing her to fall over. The same one tried to get on top of her but Sil brought her leg up and delivered a hard kick to his face, making his head snap back, purple blood shooting from his mouth. He kept stumbling back and bumped off the banister causing him to flip over and fall to his death. The last one had found Sil's leg and grabbed it stopping her from kicking him as well. He also managed to get on top of Sil, pinning her to the spot. Sil swung her arms at him cutting his face with her claws. He grunted as Sil cut him but that let him know where her arms were. He knocked them to the sides and punched her in the face. As she was dazed it gave him the time to find her throat and then started choking her. Sil's eyes went wide as she couldn't breath, the Sangheili's strong grip slowly suffocating her. Sil kicked her legs as she started to panic, black dots started to appear in her vision, the first signs of oxygen starvation. Sil felt her limbs get heavier and her heart beat getting slower. Suddenly her cloak turned off and now she could see her blurry hands clawing at the Sangheili's arms. Suddenly he let go of Sil, letting her breathe in a lung full of air. She coughed violently over and over till she caught her breath. Sil gripped her burning throat and slowly opened her eyes. The Sangheili looked at her with shock and confusion on his face, his four-way jaw hung open.

"You're a Sangheili!?" He said still shocked. "But...how is that?" He didn't get a chance to finish as a bolt of green plasma struck him in the chest.

Sil looked back and from her up side down view she could see Nip Nap



holding his smoking plasma pistol. "Nipâ€|hateâ€|ladders." He panted, methane gas smoking out his breathing mask. He looked at her then looked at the Sangheili in front of her.

Sil looked up and saw the Sangheili getting up again, he had a large black spot on his chest armour where Nip's plasma bolt hit him. Before Sil let him recover she stood up, grabbed his head and with all her strength kneed him in the face. Sil felt his four-way jaw break under the impact of her knee and as she let him go he slowly fell onto his back and lay there.

Sil fell over again and lay there breathing heavily. "I almost died again." Sil thought. She heard Nip scuttle over to her and was now standing over her.

"Hey are you ok?" Nip asked looking over her.

Sil sat up and hugged him. "Thank you." She wept. "You saved my life."

"Uh your welcome?" Nip said awkwardly.

Sil opened her eyes and saw her uncle still fighting the gold Sangheili. "Shit!" she yelled. "Uncle Jack is still fighting that monster!" She tried to look for her bow but it was nowhere to be seen.

**\*\*Jackson 001 \*\***

Jackson's injured shoulder was getting tired now his swings had less impact and the gold Sangheili knew it. The Sangheili pressed his attack driving Jackson back with deadly swings. Jackson tripped on the body of a Sangheili and fell over. The gold Sangheili loomed over him smiling, blood lust in his eyes. The Sangheili was about to finish Jackson when Char and Raskal open fired on him. The gold Sangheili turned and blocked their shot with his sword. He then charged at them, grabbing Raskal by the throat and throwing him into a wall where he slumped to the ground dazed. He then turned on Char who was still shooting into the Sangheili's chest but his shields were too strong. Char's rifle clicked empty as the gold Sangheili drove his blade into Char's stomach. "NO!" Jackson cried out as he got to his feet and ran at the Sangheili bastard. The Sangheili pulled his blade out of Char and kicked him knocking Char to the ground. The Sangheili turned and grabbed Jackson's throat stopping him in his tracks. The Sangheili kneed him in the groin knocking the wind out of Jackson then he head butted Jackson in the face causing him to fall over onto his back. Jackson dropped his sword and it clattered away from him, now the Sangheili was over him putting a boot on Jackson's chest.

"Now you die demon." The gold Sangheili spat and brought his blade up for the killing blow.

Jackson tried to move but he was still dizzy, he could only watch as the Sangheili

brought up his blade. Then a red line appeared on the gold Sangheili's chest. The Sangheili only had a second to look at his chest before a massive lazar tore through him leaving a massive hole in the Sangheili's golden armour. The Sangheili's arms went limp,

dropping his energy blade. He gasped once then fell face first on top of Jackson.

Jackson pushed the dead body off of him and stood up flexing his injured shoulder. He turned his head and saw Neaola with a Spartan laser at the entrance of the chamber.

"Did you start a party with out me?" Neaola said grinning. "Cause it looks like you've had a lot of fun." Neaola walked over to Jackson, gave him her weapon and then kicked the dead gold Sangheili's face. "THAT'S FOR STANDING ON MY UNBORN CHILDREN. You SON OF A BITCH!"

Jackson put down the weapon and moved passed Neaola and ran over to Char who was lying on the ground holding his stomach "Char!" Jackson called out in alarm.

"CHAR!?" Neaola was now running over to Char's side. She propped him up and let him lay on her knee and was starting to ramble. "Speak to me you little shit, don't die on me don't you dare."

"Owww h oho take it easy!" Char yelled in pain as his sister held him up. "I'm not dead yet. SHIT THAT HURTS!"

Jackson was amazed that Char wasn't dead let alone still able to breath. "You're one lucky Keg Yar you know that right." Jackson chuckled as he patted Char on the shoulder. "That would have killed most people."

Char grunted as he looked at his legs "Not that lucky. Iâ€¦I can't feel my legs."

Jackson looked at Char's legs and then looked at Char's wound. He put a hand around Char's back and pressed it with two fingers. Char cried out in agony as Jackson found what he expected. "The blade missed your organs but it didn't miss your spine. I'm sorry Char but you won't walk again."

Char looked at him, his face plain. But Neaola wasn't as calm "What are you saying he's crippled?"

"Yes sis." Char answered for Jackson "I am and I'm probably going to die anyway."

"No you're not. You know why" Neaola made Char look at her. "Cause you're going to be an uncle."

Char's eyes went wide as he looked at Neaola "You're kidding. No, no you're not, oh myâ€¦"

Suddenly Raskal appeared rubbing his neck. "Did you say he's going to be an uncle?"

"Yes Raskal." Char replied in pain "Yes she did."

Then he closed his eyes.

## Chapter 7: Little Wolf

Location: Drilling Chamber Cat walks.

Sil

Sil watched in horror as Char was stabbed in the stomach by the gold armoured Sangheili's energy sword, then kicked to the ground. He slid a meter away before screeching to a halt and lay still. Sil felt so helpless as she watched her uncle get knocked to the ground, his silver metal blade flew from his grasp and clattered to the icy ground with a metallic twang. Sil pulled out her magnum and went to fire, knowing full well it wouldn't stop the killing blow. "No, please no." Sil thought with dread as the Sangheili raised his blade. Sil saw a beam of energy strike the gold Sangheili's chest plate, leaving a massive hole in his chest cavity. He stood there for a brief moment, eyes wide with shock and surprise before falling forward onto uncle Jack. With relief Sil watched her uncle pull himself out from under the Sangheili's corpse and stand up, stretching his injured shoulder. He seemed all right but Sil wanted to make sure. Sil looked to her right to see Neola standing at the entrance of the chamber with a large green shoulder mounted weapon she had never seen before.

"Wow she really knows how to make a entrance." Nip Nap said seeming impressed.

Sil got to her feet and went over to the rope she had tied to the railing to let Nip and Flip escape from the two Sangheili that attacked them.

"Come on let's get down there and see what we can do to help." Sil said gesturing Nip to come over too.

Nip looked back at the ladder, then back at Sil and nodded. "Me hate ladders so yeah lets get down there that way."

With that Sil went under the railing, took the rope in both hands and zipped down to the floor below.

When Sil reached the bottom she immediately saw Flip Yum sitting behind a crate holding her bow. He looked up and his purple eyes widened as Sil walked over to him. He got up and held the bow out for her to take it.

"You dropped this." Flip said, a hint of fear in his tone. "Please don't kill me, Nip wanted me to help but I got scared and I couldn't do anything and&#x2013; and&#x2013;"

Sil knelt down beside him a put a hand on his shoulder making him go silent. He was trembling and Sil could hear him whimper under his mask. She felt so sorry for him and couldn't understand why he was terrified of her but she did her best to calm him down.

"I'm not going to kill you Flip. Why do you think I would?"

Flip looked puzzled and lost for words. "Um&#x2013; I&#x2013; um&#x2013; I&#x2013;"

Flip was cut off when Sil heard a pained howl and shot to her feet. Sil took her bow from Flip's still shaking hands and ran past the

crates. She almost tripped over the Sangheili bodies lying on the icy ground when she saw her uncle and Neaola crouched down beside Char who was in bad shape. When Sil got to them Char's eyes were closed and he was very still.

"No please no, tell me he's notâ€¦" Sil was cut off when her uncle got up and put his hands on her shoulders.

"No he's not dead. He just passed out." Uncle Jack said calmly.

Sil was still looking at Char's still form and couldn't help but think of the worst. "He's going to live right? Please don't lie to me uncle."

Sil's uncle stayed silent for a moment. Sil didn't like that and was about to say something when he said in a flat tone "I don't know if he will make it or not, what I do know is as long as we're still standing he has a chance. So I need you to keep it together. Alright?"

Sil opened her mouth but didn't say anything. Instead she just nodded and looked at the ground. "Yeah ok you're right." She finally said, feeling silly and childish.

Sil's uncle put the tip of his hand under her chin and made her look at him. He then pointed at her face. "That's quite a shiner you got there, you might want to look at it." He took off his helmet revealing his dark skinned and scruffy face. He handed his helmet to Sil for her to take a look at her face.

Sil looked into the helmet's reflective gold visor and in the reflection she saw the left side of her face was swollen slightly, and had a large cut on her left cheek. Sil put a hand on the cut and pain shot through her cheekbone.

"Aaa damn it that stings!" She cursed under her breath. She looked at her fingers. Her purple blood was warm and sticky on her hand. She hated blood, never welcomed the sight of it, and never will.

Sil looked up and saw her uncle's steely blue gaze fixed upon her. He looked cross, furrowing his brow slightly. "I told you to be more careful." He stated, taking his helmet back. "I knew I shouldn't have sent the Grunts with you. They can't even take care of themselves let alone protect you."

Sil took offence to that. Before her uncle could put his helmet back on Sil stopped him. "NO!" Sil shouted, curling her lips in anger. "Why do treat Flip and Nip like dirt, they got me out of a tight spot." Sil stopped and rephrased. "Wellâ€¦ one of them did."

Uncle Jack lowered his helmet and gave Sil an angry look. "What happened?"

Sil just rolled her green eyes, trying to get to the point. "That doesn't matter." Sil defiantly stated "What matters to me is I want you to stop treating them like their lives are worthless. They're brave sometimes, kind and they stayed with me even when I didn't want them too." She waved her arms and spun on the spot on one heel, adding. "If that's not worth something I don't know what is."

With out his helmet on Sil could see the emotions playing across Her uncle's face. He was good at controlling his emotions, but Sil could tell when something affected him. The narrowing of the eyes, the slight twitch of the lips, and his silence all told Sil what she said hit home. He stayed silent as he stuck his hand into one of the pockets attached to his belt and pull out a small med-kit. He got Sil to hold his helmet again as he opened the kit and took out some medical tape and disinfectant. He cleaned the cut on Sil's cheek with the disinfectant, which hurt a lot, and then used the tape to close the wound.

"That's the best I can do for now." He said, taking his helmet back and sealing it on his head again. "You're going to need to get that stitched up if you want it to heal properly."

"Oh lovely, more stiches." Sil said sarcastically as her uncle moved past her and went to gather up some gear.

Sil looked back at Char and Neaola. Raskanl was standing over Neaola as she kept Char's head on her knee, keeping a close eye on him. Sil heard some footsteps echoing through the chamber and looked to her right to see a group of Kig Yar, armed with different types of weaponry, make their way in. They spread out around the chamber, gathering what they could while one Kig Yar with light green skin, fur coat and a black jump suit ran up to Neaola.

"Neaola are you hurt?" He knelt down beside Char. "What happened to Char is heâ€|?"

Neaola put a hand up to silence him and said. "He's still alive doctor. As for me wellâ€| you already know that part."

The doctor, Sil now knew, turned his head and fixed his yellow eyes on her. "So you're the Sangheili who was with Soran as he died?"

Sil froze and tightly clenched her jaws together. Who was this Soran? "Umâ€| Who's Soran?" Sil asked.

"Neaola's father, she said you were there when he died, correct?"

Sil felt her chest go tight with dismay as she remembered the old Kig Yar's final moments. Even as he died his only wish was to let his children know he died a badass. Sil breathed in deep and let out slowly as she admitted. "Yes, yes I was there beside him as he died. There was nothing I could do for him, I tried but he was too far-gone. I'm sorry I couldn'tâ€|"

The doctor cut her off with a snort "I only asked if you were there not a life story."

Sil was caught off guard and tightened her lower jaws in anger. Sil controlled herself however. Arguing would not help things even if this doctor were being an ass-hole. Instead she rolled her green eyes and asked. "Is there anything I can do to help?"

The doctor again fixed his yellow gaze on her and looked to be deep in thought. "Some pain killers would be nice, I used the last one on Neaola and when poor Char here comes too, he's going to be in a lot of pain."

Sil let herself grin as she flicked her hair back and said. "Well lucky for you I have some with me, well sort of." She knelt down and took off her backpack. She went through her stuff till she found what she was looking for, a small, metal, silver case. She opened it and inside was two small vials of clear green liquid and two needles. It was Sil's pain medication. The green liquid acted as a good numbing agent and pain reliever. Sil knew she'd get in a lot of trouble for doing this but Char needed it, and besides it was originally made for Kig Yar.

"Is thatâ€|?" The doctor scoffed in disbelief. "Pillyamorfacen?"

Sil had no idea what that meant so she just nodded wide-eyed. "Umâ€| sure?" She just shrugged. "All I know is it's good at killing pain and lasts a long time." Sil gave him one vial and needle. "You need to inject it inâ€|"

The doctor cut her off again as he was already injecting the stuff into Char's neck. "I know I've used these before but tell me why you have such a drug in your possession, do you know what this stuff does to you in the long run?"

Before Sil could ask she heard her uncle call for her and Neaola. Sil flipped the metal case shut and stuffed it in her bag and got to her feet. Neaola was doing the same, before she got up Neaola gently settled Char's head on the ground and looked at the doctor. "Look after him for me doc." She said.

The doctor nodded, taking off his fur coat and putting it under Char's head. "He's in good hands Neaola, now go."

Neaola looked at Sil and gestured for her to follow. Sil nodded and fell in line with Neaola and headed for uncle Jack.

They spotted him at the entrance of the new ice tunnel and walked up beside him. He turned around and Sil saw him holding the large green laser weapon Neaola had used to kill the gold Sangheili. He also had retrieved his tesla sword, now hanging off his belt again. He handed the large weapon to Neaola and spoke. "Alright we know that a large group of red armoured Sangheili went down this tunnel and we also know they have Chackrol with them." He paused for a moment and then added. "So how are we going to do this, any ideas?"

Sil wasn't much of a tactical genius when it came to these sorts of situations. "I don't know." Sil admitted with a shrug "What about you Neaola?"

Neaola looked at Sil with a tired expression but answered. "I don't see what I could tell you. All I know is my husband has been looking for a Forerunner structure andâ€|"

Uncle Jack cut Neaola off saying. "We know that already."

Neaola put her hands on her hips and stared at him. Her bright blue eyes full of irritation. "Well then we're at an impasse." Neaola said, crossing her arms over her chest.

Sil had just thought of something and asked her uncle. "Uncle you know these Sangheili better than I do, how do we find out what

they're doing?"

Neaola laughed, saying. "Isn't it clear? They're here for what ever is in that structure."

Uncle Jack turned his head to Neaola and said. "True but they wouldn't just walk in there and just find what ever it is they're looking for right away." He turned and looked at Sil and added "Not with out some way to map it first."

"The lenses." Neaola said, looking back in the chamber. "I bet the gold bastard has high level info on his. Wait here." And without another word she darted way on her nimble legs and went to the gold Sangheili's body.

"Lenses?" Sil asked in confusion.

Uncle Jack answered. "They have HUD lenses that let them see tactical info in real time." He pointed at his visor. "Same as my HUD but smaller."

Sil frowned and caught site of Neaola coming back with something in her clawed hand. She went up to Sil and handed her two black contact lenses. Sil curled her lip and parted her four-way jaw as she just realised where they came from. "These were on the gold one's eyes? His dead eyes?"

Neaola nodded. "Yep."

"Eeewww No!" Sil said in disgust and stuck her arm out at Neaola for her to take them back. "You can forget it if you think I'm going to put these on my eyes. And why do I have to put them on anyway?"

Neaola crossed her arms again and said in a irritated tone "(A) Stop being so pathetic. (B) It's fine they self clean. AND (C) you're Sangheili, your eyes are the right size, so shut up and get them ON ALREADY."

Sil scrunched up her face as she looked at the black lenses on her right hand. With her other hand she slowly picked one up and brought it up to her eyes for a closer look. On the front it was a normal lens, plain and devoid of detail. When Sil turned it over, it was see through with strange symbols flashing across its surface. With a light sigh Sil put the lens on her left finger and with trepidation she held her eyelid open with her right hand and attempted to put in the lens.

"What's the hold up?" Neaola said angrily.

Sil put her hands down and glared at her. "You try doing something you've never done before and tell me how easy it is. Until then shut up."

Neaola curled her lips and showed her sharp teeth and growled in ever growing anger.

"Oh you're so scary want to see mine?" Sil split apart her four-way jaw, showing her fangs and rows of pointy needle like teeth.

They both hissed at each other in challenge but were cut off by uncle Jack's loud metallic voice. "ENOUGH!" He stomped the icy ground causing cracks to form around his armoured boot. "Pack it in both of you, have you two forgotten that there are enemies here and they're trying to kill us. So lets pull it together."

Sil clamped her jaws shut and felt ashamed at her childish behaviour. Where Neaola just shrugged and looked away, crossing her arms. Enough had been said so Sil tried again and was successful. The lens caused her eye to spazz out as it made contact. She blinked for a moment before her vision cleared. Her vision was a purple haze and symbols danced across her eye sight. Sil didn't understand the writing and it was only half of the full HUD. Sil put in the second one and blinked again and again before she could see clearly. "Wow this is kind of cool and oh yes it has a motion tracker. Oh I love technology."

Neaola growled in annoyance and said. "Yes, yes, yes, get to the part where we know what to do."

Sil just scratched her head in confusion as she tried to make sense of what she was seeing "I can't make heads or tails of this, its all text I can't read."

Neaola frowned in confusion and put her hands above her head saying "What do you mean you can't read it, you're Sangheili!?"

Sil took the lenses out and glared at Neaola again. "I wasn't raised by Sangheili, in fact I don't know much about them so give me a break."

Neaola sighed sharply and looked at uncle Jack. "Can't you do anything, you know take the data and do something?"

Uncle Jack shook his head. "I'd need an AI for that and I don't have one."

Neaola started to shake her arms in rage and started to yell at them. "Then how are we supposed to come up with a plan if youâ€|" She pointed a claw at Sil "Can't read Sangheili and youâ€|" She turned on uncle Jack "Can't do anything with out â€| whatever it is you call it?"

Sil gestured at Neaola and said. "What about you?"

Neaola just slapped her hand to her forehead and said behind gritted teeth. "Because my eyes are too big for the lenses so thanks for asking miss clever."

Sil had an idea but she didn't like it one bit. "Well if I can't read it we're going to need another Sangheili who can."

Neaola crossed her arms she seemed to do that a lot, and asked sarcastically "Oh and I guess you know whom to ask?"

"Yep." Sil answered and added. "And he's up on that catwalk."

Jackson 001



After climbing up a 20-meter ladder Jackson, Sil and Neaola stood over the unconscious Sangheili whose face was a blood soaked mess. He had reddish grey skin with a scar on the left side of his face going down from his eye right to the lower jaw. "Wow that looks like it hurts. Are you sure he's still alive." Just as Neaola finished the Sangheili's foot twitched.

"Yep." Jackson sighed. "He's still alive, come on lets get him down below."

After a lot of teamwork Jackson and a team of Kig Yar miners managed to lower the Sangheili to the ground floor by rope. Jackson then dragged the Sangheili to a pair of gravity clamps attached to the wall. Jackson presumed this is where they had held Chackrol and Jackson couldn't help but smirk at the irony. Shortly after he had clamped the Sangheili to the wall, Jackson took the opportunity to swap the Sangheili's HUD lenses before he woke up. Sil, Neaola, Nip Nap, Flip Yum and Raskal all stood around the Sangheili as he sluggishly opened his eyes. "Rise and shine sleepy head." Raskal snickered, tapping the Sangheili on the cheek.

The Sangheili's eyes shot open and he glared at each person in front of him except for Sil who was just behind Jackson. When his eyes met Jackson's visor he roared and pulled on the clamps holding him to the wall. The Sangheili started making garbling sounds and Jackson turned to Sil asking. "Can you make out what he's saying?"

Sil shook her head. "I can't understand a word he's saying."

"That's because his jaws are dislocated." Neaola said pointing to the Sangheili's limp jaws. "I speak Sangheili and all I'm getting from him is garble garble bla bla."

Jackson turned and eyed the Sangheili as he tightened his hand into a fist. "Well then we're just going to have to fix that." With out another word Jackson delivered a hard punch to the left side of the Sangheili's face. There was a loud crack and pop as the blow knocked two of the Sangheili's jaws back in place. The Sangheili cried out in agony, shaking his head violently from side to side and pulling harder on the clamps.

"WAS that necessary uncle!?" Sil yelled stepping forward to stop Jackson from hitting him again.

"AAAAAA FILTHY HUMAN mishoom!" The Sangheili roared displaying his fractured fangs.

"Can't say it didn't work." Jackson said with a shrug.

Sil rolled her eyes and sighed. "You didn't need to punch him."

Jackson stepped forward and said to the Sangheili's face. "He had it coming."

The Sangheili growled at him. "Demon I fear not the path of death I welcome it." He snarled.

Jackson gripped the top of the Sangheili's blue helmet and made him look into his visor and said plainly. "You know, that's what they all

say. But you really want to know what I find interesting?" He leaned in closer to the Sangheili's face and whispered. "The ones that defy death openly are really the ones who fear it the most." Jackson clamped his hand around the Sangheili's throat and applied pressure. "So why don't you cut the bullshit and just maybe you'll get through this alive?"

Jackson could feel the Sangheili's pulse quicken as a slight tremble went down the Sangheili's spine.

"Whatâ€¦ what do youâ€¦ want from me?" The Sangheili gasped.

Jackson lessened his grip but kept his hand on the Sangheili's throat. "That's the easy part, you just have to read the information you have on your new HUD, and I'll know when you're lying so don't play games with me."

Jackson let go of the Sangheili and retook his spot in the group. The Sangheili was silent for a moment as Jackson saw from his expression he was thinking long and hard. "If I'm co-operative how do I know you won't just kill me as soon as I'm no longer any use to you?" The Sangheili finally asked. "You humans are well known for your skill in lying and back stabbing."

"You have my word." Jackson answered coldly.

The Sangheili snorted at that, not believing in Jackson's promise. "How do I know you will keep your word?" He sneered.

"Because I'm going to hold him to his promise."

Sil came out of her spot from behind Jackson and let the Sangheili see her clearly.

Sangheili on the wall

He stared at the female for a long time when she finally revealed herself.

Her beauty had left him dumbstruck as he watched how gracefully she moved. She was short for a Sangheili and even though she wore baggy clothing and steel silver plaiting, it did not hide her slender features. Her black hair was long, spikey, and smelled like fresh fruit. A single white streak of hair went down one side of her face. Her tan coloured skin looked smooth and soft. Her face was what held his gaze the most. Her young face had a plain yet intimidating expression and was a lighter tan with brown freckles dotted around her cheeks. He noticed the cut on the left side of her face he had made when he was fighting her on the catwalks was being held shut by some sort of tape. And then there were her eyes. Those intensely green eyes seemed to glow and see right into his soul.

Just seeing this female reminded him too much off home, and his beloved Lrisa. Oh how he missed her.

Suddenly a hand waved in front of his face, snapping him out of his thoughts and back into reality. "Focus." The human stated. How long had he been staring at her.

"What's your name?" The female asked.

Strangely she spoke in human English instead of Sangheili but he had learned to speak it so he replied. "How about you tell me your name first little wolf."

The female gave him a sceptical look but she answered. "Sil."

He frowned. "Sil? Sil who?"

She crossed her arms over her chest and countered "One question one answer. Your turn."

He smiled slightly on the good side of his face, Sil reminded him a little of his wife. He bowed his head slightly and finally answered. "Teal'c. Teal'c Mano. That is my name."

Sil's face seemed to brighten up at his co-operative answer. The human just stared at him; well at least Teal'c thought he was. It's hard to tell with that helmet. Teal'c could see his battered face in the Human's reflective visor and cringed when he saw his mangled right side jaws hanging limp under his muscle, he couldn't even feel them as they hung uselessly off his face. Sil took a few steps forward and craned her neck to look up at Teal'c's face. She was even smaller up close. "I hate asking this but we really need your help. Chackrol's life may even depend on it."

She had some nerve to ask him for anything. She killed his friend and had broken half his jaw. She had no right. Then again, it was his fault for being here in the first place, and it was his fault his friend was dead. Most of all it was his fault for being bested by a woman in combat. "Aiding my enemy is not only shameful, it is treason, punishable by death." Teal'c paused then added. "It's less than I deserve." He looked Sil in the eye and stated. "As you wish little wolf, I'll help you. I'll take your word over a human's on one condition." Teal'c looked past the group in front of him and over to the crates on the far side. He knew what lay there. "You let me say my goodbyes to an old friend, and then I'll help you."

She nodded sympathetically and stood back as the human came up to his side and deactivated the gravity clamps.

Location: In Forerunner structure.

30 minutes earlier.

Chackrol Roscal

Chackrol would have been overwhelmed with excitement if it weren't for the gun prodding him in the back. Ral had sent small hovering balls ahead of them and was following their line on a holographic map. Chackrol was surprised to find that the interior was heavily damaged. All the Forerunner structures he'd been in were always well preserved and flawless. But this one was in disrepair. The walls were scarred and battle torn, exposing the skeletal structure beneath. The lights on the walls were dim, leaving the hallways dark and foreboding. Sangheili eyes were nocturnal so Chackrol could see clearly in the low light of the hallways. It was also dusty and smelled of ash. What had happened here to cause such destruction? He wanted to look over his shoulder to the odd looking red armoured Sangheili, but every time he tried the Ultra would shove him or hit

him across the head with the butt of his gun. Chackrol did take the time to check his damaged robotic right arm. The casing had been dented and cracked open, exposing the gears and wires inside. It wasn't completely mangled so he could still move it, but it creaked and groaned with every movement. The bent casing gave him an idea but he dare not try in front of the eyes of the Ultra.

They suddenly came to a halt as Ral stuck his arm up and all went silent. Chackrol could hear Ral growl slightly as he sniffed the air like a Sangheili wolfhound searching for its prey. Ral let out a deep rumble in his throat as he turned to look at his men. "What is it holly one?" The Ultra asked from behind Chackrol.

Ral had a grim expression as he flexed his lower jaws in thought. "There's something in the air that doesn't smell right, it's faint but it's definitely there." He signalled with one hand and two of red armoured Sangheili moved to the front of the group. Chackrol finally got a good look at them and they were nothing he had ever seen before. From head to toe they were covered in crimson armour that was large yet elegant at the same time. Their chest plates were sleek with orange symbols. The shoulder and arm guards were curved into fine tips also showing orange symbols. Their thigh and calf guards were a similar shape but holstered odd-looking weaponry. Their helmets were the most peculiar. Boxy with sharp angles and a T shaped visor that glowed bright blue. When they went past Chackrol saw on their backs that they had some strange looking spheres attached to their armour that glowed a faint white. They went past Ral and took out small looking hilts that looked nothing like an energy blade. They both ignited their weapons and a single red, orange blade sparked to life. The blades were long, sleek and curved at the tips, their orange glow lit up the dark hallway and cast gloomy shadows. The crimson Sangheili slowly scanned left, right, up and down then turned back to Ral. "No life signs detected." One of them said, the helmet made his deep voice sound hollow and metallic.

Chackrol smirked at Ral and let his sarcasm shine. "I didn't think paranoia was your thing Ral." Chackrol let the name hang in the air for a moment then added. "Small hallways getting to you?"

The Ultra smacked Chackrol in the back of the head causing stars to appear in his vision. "Be silent cur." The Ultra spat.

When his vision cleared he could see Ral's passive expression. Ral made a single grunt then continued on. Once again Chackrol was shoved and made to follow on. The Ultra was getting on his nerves now but Chackrol had his own ways of being annoying. He kept his sight on Ral's back and cheerfully started singing. The empty hallway echoed his merry tune of a Kig Yar pirate nick-named Star-menace. The Kig Yar got the name for being a pain in the ass to the Humans and ex-covenant. Chackrol could tell his song was annoying the Ultra, from his deep growling. Chackrol had finally got to the end of the Ultra's good mood, with a roar the Ultra grabbed Chackrol's robotic shoulder and spun him around. The Ultra shoved his plasma rifle under Chackrol's chin and snarled at him. "Enough of your childish games, be silent or I'll cut out your tongue."

"What no autograph, you wound me Ultra." Chackrol pouted.

"Your very voice defiles this holy place."

Chackrol laughed at that. "You're right about one thing." He looked at the holes in the walls. "This is a holey place."

The Ultra pulled his arm back to jab Chackrol in the face with his gun when Ral ordered "Zoopa control yourself! We need him alive and undamaged."

Zoopa lowered his weapon and glared at Chackrol through his helmets lenses. He snorted at him and Chackrol was about to say something witty when one of the crimson Sangheili called out. "Life signs detected."

Ral spun around and looked at the Sangheili. "Where, what direction?"

The crimson Sangheili looked all around him "Multiple directions!" He pointed. "In the walls!"

There was scuttling sounds echoing through the dark hallways. Chackrol caught a glimpse of a face staring at him through one of the dark holes in the wall and vanish just as quick as it appeared. Chackrol felt a fear so primal it sent a shiver down his spine. "What was that!?" Chackrol said in apprehension as he kept his eyes on the hole.

"We are surrounded!" The crimson Sangheili said seemingly keeping his cool.

Something wet and slimy latched itself to Chackrol's robotic arm. Chackrol looked down in sheer horror as hundreds of slimy tentacles wrapped and squirmed around his arm. The thing had a pale round spikey body, which wriggled with excitement. Chackrol let out a primal roar and grabbed it with his free hand and tried to yank it off of him. The Ultra was screaming too but Chackrol didn't take his eyes off the thing attached to his arm. The little bastards body was too slippery to get a good grip and he could feel it was trying to dig its sharp tentacles into the thick skin around the seal of his robotic shoulder. Chackrol did the only thing he could think of. He clamped his jaws on the things back and it exploded with a loud pop. The taste was unspeakably disgusting as Chackrol gaged on the slime caught in his throat. He felt like he was going to puke but that feeling vanished when he saw what was happening to the Ultra. Another one of the little slime balls had locked itself around Zoopa's helmet and wasn't letting go. The Ultra flailed his arms around in panic as he desperately tried to get his helmet off. "THE FLOOD!" Ral roared as he pulled out two of the same red orange blades as the crimson Sangheili had.

"So" Chackrol thought, "This is the Flood."

All around him more of the Flood came out of the holes in the walls and started to swarm them. Chackrol's earlier idea came to mind and he brought up his robotic arm. He took hold of one side of the cracked casing and yanked hard. There was a loud metallic screech as he pull away apart of the casing and held it in his hand. Now armed with a piece of sharp and serrated metal, Chackrol wasted no time making his escape. The Flood tried to leap onto him but were cut down as soon as they got near him. As he ran past Zoopa he could see the Flood thing had got under his helmet and was now digging into his mouth. Chackrol left the Sangheili to suffer as he ducked and rolled

past the other crimson Sangheili and with all his will ran for his life back down the way they had come with the Flood close behind.

## 8. Chapter 8

### Chapter 8: The Structure

Location: Drilling chamber

Jackson 001

Shortly after Jackson had released Teal'c, the big Sangheili had gone over to a bunch of crates. He and Sil had gone over with him to make sure he didn't try to do anything reckless. Jackson didn't trust Teal'c one bit and got a shotgun from one of the Kig Yar to make his point clear. "Why do you have to shove a gun into everything?" Sil asked quietly, also letting a hint of irritation creep into her voice.

"I don't trust him and neither should you. He is an asset nothing more."

Sil frowned at him as they walked. "You're starting to sound like the person that got us into this mess. You know who I'm talking about."

Jackson stiffened his shoulders at that and he knew she saw it but he didn't look at her. "You trust him if you really want, but I'm going to be ready for when the time comes."

Sil interrupted him. "You're not seriously still thinking about killing him are you?" He ignored her question. "Are you seriously going to go back on your promise? You can't just"

Jackson cut her off with a harsh tone in his voice. "This is not up for discussion. The only thing keeping him alive is his usefulness, and when that runs out I'll" Jackson stopped himself when he saw the hurt look on Sil's face. "Aaa shit" He thought. "I went too far." As they walked past the crates Jackson lightly elbowed Sil on the shoulder and she looked up at him. "Look I'll give it some thought ok."

She seemed to brighten up at that, but it didn't last long. When they turned the corner of the crates Teal'c was standing over the crumpled body, Jackson assumed was his friend. The smaller Sangheili had fallen off the catwalks and had landed head first, breaking his neck. Jackson couldn't detect any emotion from Teal'c as he moved his friend's body into a more dignified position. He straightened up his friend's body, clasped his hands over his chest and closed his eyes. Then Teal'c knelt down on one knee, hands cupped together, lowered his head and started praying. Jackson couldn't understand what he was saying but that didn't concern him. What concerned him was Sil. She was upset and looked ready to burst into tears. "Don't cry." Jackson said softly, putting his right hand on her left shoulder. She looked at him again with her sad green eyes. "It will offend him, and shame his friend's passing."

Jackson didn't really care about Teal'c's honour or his friend's

death. In fact he believed he had it coming. But he couldn't take seeing Sil cry again and he definitely didn't want her to shed a tear for a guy who tried to kill her. Teal'c had finally stopped praying and stood up. But before he did he pulled something off of his friend's belt. "Hey what do you think you're doing!?" Jackson demanded, aiming his shotgun at Teal'c's already blackened chest-plate.

Teal'c put his hands casually in the air and showed them what he had taken. It was the hilt of an energy sword.

"Do not take this as an act of trickery Human." Teal'c explained, "I have no intention of using this weapon on you or the others."

Jackson stepped closer and pointed the shotgun right between Teal'c's eyes. "And I'm just supposed to take your word on that?" Jackson asked in a deadly tone. "I don't think so. Hand it over or things get messy."

The Sangheili didn't move but he did stare past the barrel in his face and looked straight at Jackson's visor, not seeming bothered by the shotgun. "This blade has been passed down my friend's family for generations. It is sacred and he made me promise if he fell in battle and I still lived. I was to bring it back home and return it to his family." Teal'c leaned forward just enough for the barrel of the shotgun to touch his forehead then added. "I will not go back on my promise Demon, and you're not going stop me."

Jackson tightened his finger around his trigger as his anger increased. "This is your last warning Sangheili. Hand. IT. OVER." Jackson could feel his heart rate quicken as adrenalin started to pump through his veins.

"NEVER!" Teal'c snarled.

Jackson pulled the trigger.

Just a second before he fired, Teal'c moved his head to one side and let the buckshot fly over his shoulder. Momentarily surprised Jackson's eyes widened in disbelief as Teal'c smacked the shotgun out of Jackson's hands and ignited the energy sword. This blade was different however. Its edges were jagged and it was a pale green colour. Jackson ducked below the deadly swing and pulled out his own sword and went to strike. "Oh I'm going to enjoy this." Jackson stated but Teal'c had other ideas.

He hopped back on one leg and kicked out with the other to Jackson's head. The move caught Jackson off guard and he fell flat on his back. He looked up to see Teal'c come at him with a charge, his blade held over his head.

"I'm going to tear you apart Demon!"

Suddenly Sil appeared out of thin air from Teal'c's left side and parried his overhead blow downward with the shotgun. Sparks and lightning danced off its metal surface. In the same move she brought the butt of the gun up hard into Teal'c's already messed up face with a loud thud. He howled in pain as he stumbled back, clutching his bloody nose. Sil then came up with a kick to his groin and caused him

to stiffen up in unbelievable torment. He dropped the blade and fell to his knees as he gripped his stomach and grumbled in pain. "Good work Sil." Jackson sighed, getting to his feet. "Now give me the gun and I'llâ€¦" Sil suddenly came at him and kicked his own sword out of his hand. "SIL WHAT ARE YOUâ€¦" She had him completely off guard as she struck him hard in the stomach with the butt of the gun. The blow was hard enough to knock the wind out of him and he bent over in pain. From his bent position Sil put her foot on Jackson's knee and used that as a lunging platform, to flip backwards and deliver a stunning kick to his helmet. Dazed Jackson fell back, rolled on his shoulder and landed on his stomach. "Whaâ€¦ what the hell Sil?" Jackson gasped. He saw in his HUD his shield was half empty from the two overpowered blows. He got to his knees and stared at Sil who was standing in between him and Teal'c. "Why did you attack me?"

Sil's face looked ready to explode with rage, jaws clenched tightly together as she stared at him through very wide and very angry green eyes. "WHY!?" She shouted. Sil was also breathing heavily from her excursion and rage. "I'll tell you WHY. I've had enough, of all the KILLING and KILLING and killing, I just want it to stop." She threw the shotgun at Jackson and it bounced harmlessly off his armour.

"Sil Iâ€¦" He tried to speak but Sil was having none of it.

"Shut up, just shut up and listen to me for once." Jackson could see she was fighting back tears forming around her eyes as she vented her emotions. "You always told me uncle, killing is wrong and I should never take pride in it. So what do you think you're doing HUH? This isn't the uncle Jack I know, you're better than this." She spun around and started on Teal'c. "And YOU, I don't know where to even begin with you." She went over to Teal'c, bent down and took the hilt of the energy blade. "I'll be keeping this till you can be trusted." She turned and went to the corner of the crates and before she vanished past them she turned her head and said with a shaky voice. "Sort out your differentness so we can save Chackrol and get off this damn planet." And with that Sil vanished past the crates and left Jackson and Teal'c completely dumbstruck.

"Sheâ€¦aaahhâ€¦ she frightens me Human." Teal'c said as he unsteadily got to his feet and stood up, still gripping his belly as he panted softly. "Where did you find such a fierce girl?"

"I need to talk to her." Jackson got to his feet better than Teal'c, and was about to go after her when Neola and the others came speeding around the crates with their weapons ready.

"What the hell is going on back here!?" Neola demanded as she aimed her Spartan laser at Teal'c. "Did he try to kill you Human?"

"For the last time." Jackson growled, "Stop calling me Human. It's Jackson or if that's too hard to say call me Jack." Jackson looked back at Teal'c "And it's fine Neola, we were just settling ourâ€¦ differences." He bent down and picked up his sword and shotgun and added. "Well at least for now."

Teal'c just snorted at that, purple blood dribbled out his nose as he did so. Stiffly he walked up to Jackson and was only a few centimetres from his visor. Teal'c was a head taller than Jackson so he had to look up to his battered face. "So, I take it we have a



truce then?"

Jackson held his gaze for a moment before he finally said. "For now, we do."

Jackson took a few steps away from him and turned to face Neaola and the others. They all stood and looked at Jackson awkwardly, their bird like eyes seemed to shift from him to Teal'c, silently trying to work out what the hell had just happened. "Neaola, I'm going to need you over here to translate what I'm about to say to the rest of the Kig Yar." Jackson asked. Neaola raised one of her eye-ridges at that and took a place beside Jackson. He decided to keep it short.

"Workers of the Vinishia mines" Neaola started to translate Jackson's English into Kig Yar. "I know you have been through a lot in a few short hours. You've lost friends and loved ones. I understand that it hurts but we need to pull it together. The Sangheili have entered the Forerunner structure and have taken Chackrol with them. I don't know what you think of Sangheili but it's my understanding that it was he who made all this possible."

"And we're going to save him." Neaola said, looking at Jackson with determination in her bright blue eyes. "You don't need to convince us Jack we all want to get some pay back. Go see your girl, we'll get ready over here and keep an eye on that one." She finished by pointing at Teal'c who was still just standing there.

Jackson nodded and went past the crates to go find Sil.

He found her at the circular entrance of the tunnel leading into the structure. She was leaning on the wall with her arms crossed and had her eyes looking straight at the ground with a pissed off expression. She looked to be in deep thought and didn't see him approach. "Sil Iâ€¦I just wantedâ€¦" He tried to speak but Sil immediately cut him off.

"I don't want to talk about it." She scowled not even looking at him. "I just want to get this over with and get off this frozen hell hole."

Jackson tried to reason with her. "I know you're upset but weâ€¦" she cut him off again by looking up and staring at him. Sil's bright green eyes seemed to see right through his visor and made eye contact. "YOU promised me uncle!" She yelled. "You promised after our last job we would get away from all this, go somewhere quiet for a while. Somewhere I can feel normal. Somewhere I can sleep not fearing if I'll ever wake up again. A place where I can enjoy every day, without the thought any of them could be my last or yours." Sil then gestured past Jackson to the ice chamber. "So what happened uncle? What happened to your promise? Why are we yet again in another place where we fear for our lives?" Jackson didn't know what to say. He had no idea she had felt this way for so long. Its probably the same reason she's been so angry lately too. He was about to speak when Neaola and the rest of the group approached with Teal'c up front. "I guess we're going to continue this after or should I say if we save Chackrol and get back to the ship." Sil then stood up straight, turned away from Jackson and started walking down the tunnel without another word.

Jackson tried to reach out to her but a large hand came down on his left shoulder and made him turn his head in response. It was Teal'c.

"What do you think you're doing?" Jackson growled in a low threatening tone.

"You should let her be." Teal'c said. There was wisdom in his voice as he spoke. "Trust me Human, let her cool off before you talk."

Jackson shrugged Teal'c's hand off and said in a harsh tone. "I don't need you to tell me how to take care of her. And don't ever touch me again."

Teal'c just sighed and brought up his other hand, which had a small disc in it. The disc came to life and a blue holographic map appeared with a yellow line leading the way. "Ral has a head start." Teal'c pointed out on the map. "I suggest we get moving without further delay."

Jackson didn't argue with that and checked his shotgun ammo by pulling back the pump, which opens the slug lid. "Alright lets get this done. Lead the way."

And with that the group moved forward and made their way into the structure. They got about five meters when Jackson added. "Um where did you get that map?"

"Off of Cano's body. What you really thought theses lenses did everything?"

Jackson didn't answer that and they just continued in complete silence.

Location: In Forerunner structure's dark hallways.

20 minutes later.

Sil

Sil's rage had subsided a while ago and now she felt troubled. She decided to walk ahead of the group and was now just behind Teal'c, who had taken the lead. Sil had never lashed out at her uncle like that before, something inside her had just snapped. Now how was she going to talk to uncle Jack, she couldn't even look at him. Sil fiddled with her necklace, rubbing the green gem between her fingers in deep thought. The dim lights of the hallway cast a soft glow and made her tan coloured skin look kind of bluish. Sil suddenly felt a hand tug her wrist and she looked down to her right to see Flip Yum hobbling behind her. "Are you ok?" he asked. Sil could see the concern in his small purple eyes.

"Ohâ€¦um hi Flipâ€¦ I'mâ€¦ umâ€¦" Sil struggled to find the words.

"Flip saw you fight the big Sangheili again. He also saw you attack the Human too." Flip said, adding, "Why hurt the Human? He no seem that bad to me."

"No its not that he's bad, its justâ€¦ aaa he just doesn't understand." Sil felt heavyhearted just thinking about it, and talking just made it feel worse.

"Why don't you just speak to him?" Flip suggested.

"I've already tried; it's not that simple." Sil protested.

"Sure it is, you spoke to Flip and now you see he no scared of you anymore."

Sil had to crack a smile at that, just a little. She then asked. "Why were you scared of me?"

Flip looked at the floor in thought as they walked down the dark hallway. When he spoke, he didn't look up. "Other Master would kill the ones that stood out of line or the ones that didn't help." Now he looked at Sil, with his happy yet sad eyes. "Flip thought you were the same but you proved him wrong."

Sil had a sense of deja vu when Flip said (Other Master) and put her hand to her forehead. "No Flip I'm not yourâ€¦" Sil turned her head and suddenly walked right into Teal'c's armoured back and banged her nose off the blue metal. "Ow shit, what the hell Teal'c!?" She yelled as she rubbed her sore nose. "Why did you just stop?"

Teal'c didn't seem to notice her as he stared past his hollow-map and down the dark hallway. A deep grumble emanated from his throat as he sniffed the air. "Something doesn't smell right." Teal'c murmured in reply.

Being a Sangheili Sil had an acute sense of smell and only when Teal'c pointed it out did she actually get a scent of something. Sil scrunched up her nose when she caught a whiff of a foul stench of decay. "What is that smell?" Sil asked, looking up at Teal'c's face. Teal'c had wrapped a leather strap around the right side of his broken jaws, so they didn't hang under his muscle anymore. He also had cleaned up his face and Sil could now see his reddish skin. Without blood covering his features Sil had to admit he had pretty good-looking face. And there was something Sil found oddly attractive about the way he looked at her.

"Something bad." He answered, knocking Sil out of her musing.

Sil pulled out her magnum and calmly aimed at hip level down the hallway and waited forâ€¦something. An ambush, charging enemy, anything to kill the eerie silence. Flip had done the same with his weapon but he wasn't as calm about it. His hand trembled as he tried to aim his plasma pistol. Teal'c on the other hand had no gun so he clenched his fists and tensed up, ready for a fight.

"What are you doing?" A voice came from behind Sil and almost made her jump out of her skin.

She spun around to see it was Neaola, still carrying her big laser weapon on her shoulder. She was also smiling. "Don't do that." Sil let out the breath she was holding as she glared at Neaola.

"Do what?" Neaola replied, not trying to hide her sarcasm.

Sil clenched her jaws angrily and was about to retort when she caught sight of her uncle right behind Neaola. For once Sil was glad uncle Jack had a helmet; she couldn't bring herself to look him in the eye.

"Do you two still have a problem?" Uncle Jack asked as he stood in between them, adding. "Because if you do it ends now."

Without another word or a reply from either of the girls he went up to Teal'c and started talking to him.

Sil turned back to Neaola and stuck out her left hand in front of her. Neaola looked confused as she looked taken aback by the gesture. "What is this?" Neaola asked, pointing a claw at Sil's hand.

"I'm calling a truce." Sil answered.

Neaola leaned forward and sniffed Sil's hand. "Umâ€¦do I lick it?"

"No." Sil couldn't help but giggle a bit. "You shake it."

Neaola still confused took Sil's hand and started shaking it back and forth lazily. "Like this?" Neaola asked.

"NO." Sil got her to let go and repeat. "This is how you do it." Sil gently took Neaola's scaly hand in hers and slowly motioned their hands up and down. "That's it you've got it now. Right?" Sil let go of Neaola's hand and waited for her response.

Neaola just stared at her hand still confused. "What was the point in that?" She finally asked.

It was Sil's turn to look confused. "You've never hand shook before?"

"I only hear of such interactions from other Kig Yar traders who do business with Humans." She looked up at Sil. " Though I never expected it from a Sangheili. What does it mean?"

Sil looked at her own hand and pondered as she did. "Well from what uncle Jack taught me when you hand shake on something you can't break it." She did a circular motion with her wrist as she continued. "It's like considered a betrayal to break it, soâ€¦"

"I bet 50 credits you'll break it first." Neaola challenged with a big grin, showing off her dazzling pearl white teeth.

Sil was about to object when she thought better of it. Sil started to grin though she showed no teeth but was just as big. "You're on. Though I must warn you. I keep my deals."

Still grinning Neaola just walked past Sil and up to uncle Jack and Teal'c. She was about to join them when the sound of pitter-pattering feet caught Sil's attention. As Sil looked back past the group of Kig Yar she saw Nip Nap hopping and sometimes jumping down the passage. When the little Unggoy reached her she could hear him breathing heavily as green gas seemed to shoot out his mask in quick, short puffs. It smelled but she was used to it so it didn't bother her "Nip?" Sil asked. "Where have you been?"

Nip found it hard to speak as he tried to catch his breath. "Doctorâ€¦say... Charâ€¦awake. Nip is to tellâ€¦ Neaola the news."

"Oh shit." Sil swore in concern "Hope my meds I gave to the doctor helps with the pain."

"Sil." Came the voice of uncle Jack. "Get over here."

Sil started walking up to uncle Jack and called back to Nip, who was now standing beside a concerned Flip again. Using his friend for support as he pressed his breathing mask harder to his face. "I'll tell Neaola ok. You just catch your breath."

Sil got up to Neaola, Teal'c and uncle Jack, they all seemed to be talking about something. "What was that about?" Uncle Jack asked.

"That was Nip telling me Char's awake now." Sil replied.

"Is he in pain?" Neaola asked in concern.

"Don't know. All I know is he's awake now. What were you all talking about?"

They all looked at each other before uncle Jack spoke. "Teal'c tells me something doesn't smell right." Uncle Jack stated with a thumb in the direction they were heading.

"I agree." Neaola chimed in. "I don't now why but this place seemsâ€ wrong." Neaola and Teal'c looked at uncle Jack. "What about you?" Neaola asked.

Uncle Jack crossed his arms over his chest plates and tilted his head slightly to the right in thought. "I don't smell trouble, I feel it. Something was off the moment we set foot in this structure. I can't put my finger on it but there's defiantly more than just spookiness to this place, I can tell you that."

Then they all turned to Sil. "You?"

"What is this a democracy?" Sil protested.

"What's aâ€ dimocracky?" Teal'c asked, he had some trouble pronouncing the last word.

Sil just face-palmed in annoyance, this was getting nowhere. "Look can we just get moving again please?"

Without another word they all nodded in agreement and continued down the dark hallway.

Since their last discussion the group walked in silence, keeping their guard up.

Sil had to admit to herself that this place just felt wrong, she didn't understand why but it just did. Every time they passed a large gap in the wall Sil couldn't help but feel that something was watching them from the darkness. All of Sil's survival instincts were setting off alarms in her head. Her mind screamed at her to turn tail and run. Run and never look back. But she had a task a job that had to be done. And she was going to see it through, no matter what.

They came to a stop when they reached the end the passage and it split off into two new separate hallways, and both were pitch black. "Which way do we go now?" Uncle Jack asked Teal'c.

Teal'c scrutinised the hollow-map and pointed to his right. "That way." He said, following his own finger and starting to walk. Sil was close behind him as they all turned the corner. They walked about two meters before Teal'c suddenly stopped and was stuck still, frozen in place. Sil was about to ask him what was wrong when. She saw what he was staring at. In the darkness at least four meters away stood a lone figure. It was too dark to make out its features but Sil could tell it was big. Really freaking big.

"Chackrol?" Neaola called out with a hint of hope in her voice. "Is that you?"

The figure did not reply, just made a low clicking sound. "I don't think that's Chackrol." Teal'c stated.

It opened its eyes and what shone forth made Sil's hearts beat quicker and stomach go cold. The thing's pearl like eyes pierced the darkness and stared at them with a cold. Dead. Gaze as it took a step forward. Uncle Jack had trained Sil to suppress fear and control her stress levels in order to stay focused and on task. All that cool clarity seemed to melt as the thing came more and more into view. She could smell something foul as the thing approached. It smelt like something died and had been buried for 2 weeks only to be dug up again. Sil felt like she was going to throw up. Then uncle Jack did something Sil wished he hadn't. He turned on his helmet-lights and illuminated the figure. Whatever shred of calm Sil had left. Was now non-existent. Standing nearly 5 meters tall it was completely naked except for a layer of slime that covered its pale yellow skin from head to toe. Its body was muscular and bloated at the same time also dotted with black spots. Its right arm looked normal except for its over sized hand which long sharp claws protruded out of. The left arm wasn't so normal. From its shoulder down to its wrist it was completely bloated and misshapen ending in long slimy tentacles. The legs were humanoid so it defiantly wasn't Chackrol. Sil took little comfort in that. But what held Sil's gaze the most was its face. Its face was thin and withered, dark rings circled the eye sockets and hundreds of spines populated the top of its head. The nose was completely gone as if it had rotted away some time ago. Sil's hearts beat loudly in her ears as she was transfixed by its stare that hungry never ending stare.

"Silia."

A deep voice so empty and rotten reverberated through Sil's skull, seeming to come from everywhere. Sil looked at the thing's face, its lips formed no words but instead did something Sil wasn't prepared for. It smiled. Cracked and rotten lips pulled up to reveal yellow razor sharp teeth and a long drooling tongue that flicked around in lustful eagerness.

"Join us, and we will become one."

With its right hand it casually waved, flexing its over sized fingers. What came next made Sil lose all sense of her surroundings. Sil's vision pulsed and pain surged through her mind. A green haze

started to form around the edges of her vision, when she looked at her hands. They seemed so far away like she was stretching longer and longer or her soul was being torn from her body. Sil felt so bizarre and much lighter than she was. Then the pain started again more intense and she griped her head wishing it would stop. The voice kept speaking.

"Become one, with the flood."

Something touched Sil's shoulder and she turned to see a mass of swirling black smoke with a single blood red eye.

Location: Deep within the Forerunner Structure

Ral 'M' Hondow

Ral's Hard-light blade cut deep into the last of the skinny withered combat form's chests, its soulless black eyes showed no hint of anguish as Ral's blade burned its insides. The combat form in front of him was as tall as he was but its muscles had decayed away a long time ago and was now nothing more than a starving husk. Their frail bodies were no match for Ral's raw strength and powerful Hard-light weaponry. With a sickening crunch and a loud popping sound he yanked his blade out of the form's rotten chest cavity and let it crumple to the floor with a wet splat. "Filthy abominations." Ral said in disgust. "Anymore?" Ral asked, as his troopers were finishing off what was left of the Flood swam that had attacked them. One had put his boot on a combat forms chest pinning it to the floor and was spraying his Suppressor into its abdomen, bits of flesh and guts flew in all directions. Where another had drove his hand into a forms chest and pulled out the Flood spore within, letting it squirm in his grasp for a moment before crushing it into a slimy, gut dripping mess. When the rest were done one of them approached Ral and answered his question.

"The rest of the Flood have fled." The crimson trooper replied, bowing his head. The visor of his helmet cast a light blue glow that lit up the dark hall they were standing in, reflecting off of his and the other's armour around him.

"Are you sure?" Ral insisted.

"Yes Ship Master, no more have shown up on the scanners." Again the trooper bowed.

This was what puzzled Ral the most. Why did the Flood keep retreating, it wasn't like them to give up so easily. The Flood he knew never gave up, were blood thirsty and ruthless. But these ones were different, like they had some new animal cunning. They attacked in small packs and they only struck when Ral and his troops had entered a new area. It was almost like they were trying to conserve their numbers, for what Ral didn't know. He turned away from his men and eyed the large silver door that blocked their progress. The door was 2 meters taller than he was, with a curved top and unlike all the other doorways they had come across this one was locked. He holstered his weapons, stepped forward and put his hand on the cool metal, running his fingers along the claw marks that populated its surface.

"Why is there so many claw marks?" Ral thought, as he kept inspecting

the door. "What was the Flood trying to get at?"

Suddenly when his hand brushed across some symbols near the doors seal, a holographic control panel appeared with a bright blue flash, which made Ral jump slightly. The control panel was a bunch of holographic text, which formed itself into an "O" shape.

"A combination lock." Ral muttered to himself, turning to his men. "Torn get over here."

The one called Torn walked over and eyed the panel. He looked at Ral, and waited for his orders. "You sure you have studied the Forerunner glyphs I provided, correctly?" Ral asked.

"With what you gave me, I'm confident I can unlock it." Torn answered with a swift eagerness.

"Good. Now impress me." Ral motioned to the panel.

Torn flexed his shoulders, cracking his neck and fingers at the same time as if getting ready for a fight. He lifted one hand from his side and hovered it over the control icons. Detecting his presence new smaller icons appeared and moved around his claws in a graceful yet ghostly manor. Slowly he twisted his hand counter-clockwise and the icons followed, shifting from blue, purple and red. One of them turned green and locked into place with a low beep. He then did it the other way and another turned green with the same low beep. Ral could feel his excitement grow every time the beep came. The anticipation was almost suffocating as he realised he was holding his breath. A few more beeps later all the icons were green and the control panel vanished. There was a hiss and a click as the door unlocked. The doors slid apart and a blast of freezing air washed over Ral's face, making him close his eyes. He raised his arm in an attempt to shield himself from the stinging cold. The wind went as quickly as it came and left in its wake an eerie silence. Ral broke the silence when a handle attached to his wrist flew into his grasp and a Boltshot built itself in his hand. It made a soft hum as the energy inside came to life and glow a strong gold. He was the first to step forth into the icy cold passage that went down into the depth of the structure. Ral turned back to his men who waited patiently for his orders.

"One of you stay here and guard the entrance, let nothing pass."

Without hesitation one of them said. "I will stay and make sure none pass."

Ral nodded and he and the rest of his men descended into the dark cold passage.

(Writer's note)

Sorry for the long delay, college and GTA online have been a bit of a distraction but well I think you get the picture.

The chapters will keep on coming if anyone is worried, the lack of feedback on my story has left me in a position where I really have no idea what people are thinking.



OH! If any of you like art I have a deviant-Art account with my own art of my characters. Just type Predman1227 on the web site and you'll see my stuff.

Thanks again for reading my story and a thanks to my Dad and sister who are my editors.

## 9. Chapter 9

### Chapter 9: Dead Ones

Location: Kig Yar group, Forerunner Structure.

Jackson 001

The moment Jackson turned on his helmet lights he completely regretted it. The thing in front of him was the ugliest bastard he had ever seen, and Jackson had seen all kinds of ugly in his time. Slime literally dripped off of its scaly naked body, had long misshapen human like limbs and had a face not even a mother would love.

"You are one ugly mother fâ€|" Jackson's thought was cut off when the thing started flexing its over sized claws and slowly waved its right hand in the group's direction. He could see on the palm of its hand it had small sucker like holes where sickly green smoke appeared. With the motion of its hand it wafted the smoke, and after a few seconds Jackson started to notice a change in the group. All around him he could hear coughing and moaning, then a low whine followed shortly by a number of high pitched screeches that got his heart pumping. Jackson swiftly turned around and what he saw left him horrified.

"What the hell?" Jackson whispered.

The Kig Yar were going completely crazy. He watched as two of them literally tore into one another like mindless animals. Their claws carving deep into their scaly skin and sharp teeth tearing out chunks of flesh, muscle and even revealing the bone beneath. Then Jackson watched one pound his head off the metal wall, every time it struck he could hear the Kig Yar's skull make a wet 'crack, crack' sound as the male slowly split his head open and paint the wall with his blood. Another male looked like he was trying to chew his own arm off and the rest were doing other horrifying things. A sound came from behind Jackson and he spun back around to find Teal'c on one knee, clawing at his helmet as if something was crawling around inside it. The thing that had started this was still standing four meters away, watching them with a disgusting lust filled grin.

"What the fuck is happening? Wait, why am I not going crazy?" Jackson thought as something small drifted passed his vision. It was a spore or something on those lines. He put a hand on the front of his helmet as it came to him.

"My helmet, of course." Jackson thought as he finally looked at Sil.

Unlike the others, Sil was completely still and was just staring wide eyed at her hands with her mouth slightly hanging open. She then

started gripping her head and moaning like she was in pain.

"Sil?" He reached out and touched her on her left shoulder and almost immediately she reacted. She spun around so fast he actually flinched and took a step back. Her green eyes were wide with intense fear with her pupils narrowed into slits. Her jaws had formed into a signal-like jaw giving her a slight human look. She was trembling uncontrollably as she stared at his visor. Jackson tried reaching out to her with a hand but she started backing away, her expression changing from fear into panic.

"Dâ€|don't touch me gâ€|gâ€|get away from me!" Sil's voice was tinged with dread and her breathing was getting quicker more erratic.

"Sil I don't know what that thing has done but you need to snap out of it." Jackson tried one last time to get through to her butâ€|

"NO!" She screamed, "I WON'T LET YOU TAKE ME AGAIN!" She ripped out her magnum so fast Jackson had no time to think or react as she pulled the trigger.

To Jackson's luck Sil's aim was off in her panicked state but at this range she didn't really have a lot of room to miss. The first heavy round hit him right in the chest and even though it was deflected off his shield he still felt the impact. The next three hit him in the arm, shoulder, and the last one hit him in the chest again, each one making Jackson stagger back. What alarmed him the most was his shield had gone into the red zone. Then the fourth hit him straight in the chin, the impact making his head snap back and made him lose his balance. It also made his shield pop and he felt the last round break through the armour on his left thigh and embed itself in the muscle beneath. In pain and off balance Jackson tripped over Teal'c who finally managed to get his helmet off. The big Sangheili rounded on him, roaring at the top of his lungs as he grabbed Jackson by the throat and lifted him off the ground.

"Gahâ€| Tâ€|Teal'c it's me!" Jackson gaged as Teal'c's vice like grip seemed to squeeze the life from him. He could feel his windpipe start to close up, as he was held suspended in the air. Through the pain in his leg and the choking, Jackson managed to turn his head and look at Sil. She was still pulling the trigger but the clip was empty and as soon as Sil realised that, she looked at her cloaking device.

"Sil dâ€|don't, DON'T!" Jackson pleaded.

Sil slammed the hilt of her magnum onto the cloak's activation button and in an instant she vanished. Sil's sudden disappearance actually distracted Teal'c, giving Jackson the opening he needed. He kicked Teal'c in the stomach, making the big Sangheili bend over just enough for Jackson to get his feet on the floor. Now that he had some leverage Jackson used Teal'c's own size to his advantage, by twisting Teal'c's wrist in an odd angle so he was no longer strangling him. Jackson then pressed his left elbow behind Teal'c's shoulder and made him bend down even further, so much in fact Teal'c's face was almost touching the floor.

"You going to be civil about this now?" Jackson asked in a tired stressed out tone. Teal'c roared in response and tried his hardest to get to his feet. "I didn't think so."

With speed and strength Jackson ignored the pain in his leg, flung Teal'c upright and in the same move spun and kicked him hard in the chest plate, sending Teal'c off his feet and into the wall. What Jackson didn't expect was the wall caving in from Teal'c's impact. The Sangheili lay flat on his back with chunks of the wall covering him like a blanket. He was still awake as he shook his head and tried to get up. Jackson readied himself for Teal'c's charge but something caught his eye. From the darkness of the gap in the wall Jackson saw hundreds of pale yellow eyes open all at once. Teal'c was still getting up when a mountain of Flood spores came out of the darkness like a living wave and crashed into him. Teal'c roared in surprise as the body of flesh and tentacles overwhelmed him and pushed him under.

"TEAL'C!" Jackson screamed. He unclipped his shotgun from his back and aimed at the mass of flesh.

Suddenly a skinny repulsive creature erupted from the mass of slimy Flood spores, letting out a screech so high-pitched it made Jackson's blood go cold.

It wrapped its slender fingers around the barrel of his shotgun and pulled Jackson close to its face. Its soulless beady black eyes stared at him hungrily. Its face vaguely resembled a human, which was strange considering that no one had been down here for millions of years. Suddenly its entire face split down the middle and opened. As it opened, slime and flesh stretched apart with a sickening wet peeling sound that made Jackson's stomach churn. Its face was now a gapping maw full of razor sharp teeth and tentacles. When Jackson saw the slimy slithering tentacles it sparked his phobia of snakes and he could feel himself start to panic.

"OH HELL NO!" He pulled the trigger and with a brilliant BANG of gunpowder and buckshot, the creature's torso exploded into tiny bits of flesh and bone. A lot of the gore splattered Jackson's armour, leaving globs of slime, guts and other stuff Jackson didn't want to even think about. Teal'c had completely vanished under the mob of Flood spores and Jackson cursed himself for not being quick enough.

"GOD FUCKING DAMIT!" The Flood spores started slowly creeping toward him, their little tentacles reaching out longingly.

He pumped the shotgun and fired into the little bastards trying to get at his legs. The ones that didn't were now heading for the Kig Yar. Flip and Nip were the only two in the group who hadn't been affected by the \*Mind spores\*, and were shooting at the Flood coming down the hallway they had come down. Jackson took a quick look down to his right and found the big Flood monster had vanished.

"Where did he go?" Jackson turned his head back to the group, the Kig Yar that were still alive were stumbling about, fear and confusion plastered on their reptilian faces. Jackson looked one more time at the mass of Flood spores that swallowed up Teal'c, sadly shook his head and then bolted for the group, shooting Flood spores as he went. He got in the middle and assessed the situation. The Kig Yar didn't seem to see him as some of them bumped into him. Flip and Nip were holding off the Flood the best they could but Jackson knew it wouldn't last long. Jackson looked down and found Neola on the floor

curled up into a feeble ball, her blue eyes wide with terror. He couldn't see any injuries, he knelt down beside Neaola and tried to talk to her.

"Neaola. Neaola can you hear me?" She didn't seem to see or hear him as she just stared blankly up at the ceiling. He sat her up then looked around him. The Flood were closing in though they were a lot slower than he remembered. The Unggoy's plasma pistols had gone dry and they throw them in frustration at the tiny mob.

"What DO WE DO!?" They screamed at Jackson as the mob moved closer.

Jackson looked down the hallway they hadn't gone down yet. There was no Flood coming from there so he took it. He looked around and saw many assault rifles on the floor. "Both of you grab a gun and try and herd as many Kig Yar down that hallway." He pointed to the hall behind him. The Unggoy just stared at him. "What are you waiting for DO IT!?" They both yelped and did as they were ordered.

Jackson clipped his shotgun on his back, picked up a rifle and scooped up Neaola in one arm. She wrapped her arms around his neck and hugged him tight. She was shaking uncontrollably as he kept his arm around her and got ready to move. The Unggoy had do what he had asked and were herding the Kig Yar as best as they could manage.

"COME ON GET A MOVE ON!" Jackson shouted, spraying his rifle one handed down one of the hallways. A few of the Kig Yar were still tripping about and Jackson tried his best to cover them but it was too late. The unlucky ones were swarmed in seconds and there was nothing he could do for them, except keep on firing into the hoard. The group had finally moved down the hallway and Jackson took up the rear, shooting at everything small and ball shaped, moving with the group as quickly as he could go backwards. They had gotten far now and the Flood had stop following.

"Ok they've stopped coming. Why?" Jackson thought as he looked at his ammo gauge. Five rounds left. "Damn it, just my luck." Jackson muttered to himself angrily.

"I'llâ€¦I won't tell youâ€¦I WON'T!" Neaola suddenly started talking and she sounded like she was in pain. "You'll NEVER make me talk I'll DIE FIRST!"

What was she seeing? What ever it was, it sounded like torture.

Jackson just kept moving and hoped Sil was still alive.

Sil

"Silia." A voice whispered.

"Where is that coming from?" Sil looked around and saw nothing but blackness.

"Silia."

Sil spun around and still she saw nothing. Everywhere, everything was complete darkness; she couldn't even see her hands. Sil feared if she didn't find what was going on soonâ€|she might go insane. Sil suddenly felt something warm and smooth brush the skin on her neck and she froze. The warmth travelled up her neck, under her chin and stopped on her right cheek. Slowly the warmth tugged at her and slowly she turned until her eyes met the red of a single-piercing eye.

Sil opened her eyes with a sharp intake of air and found herself face down on the floor. "Whatâ€|how did Iâ€|" Sil mumbled, she couldn't even think straight as her head pounded. Every time her hearts pulsed, waves of fresh pain surged through her skull. She lay there on her belly for a while, the metal floor hard and cold against her body, her backpack, quiver and bow all pressing down on her. That's when Sil realised her cloak was on and had some difficulty finding the off button. She was so tired that moving her arm took effort. Her fingers finally brushed over the button and the cloak turned off. Slowly she tried to get up and her fatigued body protested in response. She was on her knees when her stomach suddenly and painfully convulsed. She threw up green puke all over the floor, her back was completely bent from her retching. When she finally stopped she wailed in torment as her stomach muscles felt like they were ripping each other apart. She flopped on her side and lay there gripping her belly, as the pain continued, like a fire burning inside of her. Her jaws were so tight it hurt. Beads of sweat trickled down her face and neck. Tears welled up in her eyes.

After a minute the pain faded and her muscles relaxed. "Wâ€|where did THAT come from?" Sil groaned, shakily pushing her self back on to her knees and sat up.

She didn't feel the sudden need to throw up again so Sil took that as a good sign. For what it was worth.

She closed her eyes and breathed in through her nose and out through her mouth in an attempted to calm herself. She did this 4 times until she felt better and no longer sick. It didn't get rid of the sick feeling that still lingered in her stomach but it did take the edge off. Sil slowly opened her eyes again and looked at the pile of vomit she had made. It didn't look like it came out of a healthy stomach at all. In fact it looked completely rotten as if it had been lying there for days and the smell was enough to make Sil want to get up. She was near the wall so she used that to support herself as she shakily lifted herself off the floor. When she was on her feet Sil pushed off the wall, rebalanced herself and stood up straight. She winced as some pain in her gut acted up again.

"Must have pulled a muscle when my belly was being so kind to me." Sil sarcastically said to herself.

Sil took that moment to look around and find out where she was. She was in some sort of small dimly lit passageway that ended with a wall. Sil then looked the other way and saw some stairs also dimly lit leading up to a small open doorway. The strangest thing was, Sil had no recent memory prior to this moment. She could remember she was in a group of Kig Yar ice miners with her Human uncle Jackson. She remembered Teal'c too, he was leading them down one of two hallways when he stopped and Sil couldn't recall anything after that. What had happened, how did she come to be here and why?

Sil's head started to throb again as the image of a magnum in her hand flashed in her mind's eye. Out of habit she put her hand on her holster, to find her sidearm was missing.

"Huh, where's my magnum? Did I drop it, no I would have remembered that." The throbbing was getting worse and Sil could feel her frustration build as she clutched her head. "AAAAAAA Why can't I remember? Wait!" Sil had forgotten she still had her ear mike and tried to call uncle Jack. "Uncle, uncle its Sil, can you hear me?" She got nothing but static, so she growled in irritation. "Damn it structure, I'm getting nothing through these walls."

With nothing left to do but get out of this passage, Sil took hold of her bow, attached an arrow and begun to climb the stairs.

When she reached the top Sil had to duck through the low doorway to avoid hitting her head. She was now back in the big gloomy hallway and couldn't help feeling a little exposed.

"Alright Sil, all you have to do now is find out where the hell you are yay." As she looked around Sil couldn't stop thinking how much she missed her bed. The warm covers, her soft pillow, oh the very thought of her pillow made Sil's head loll to the side as she pictured herself lying in that bed sleeping the day away.

A low moaning sound broke Sil from her happy thoughts and made her crouch in a fighting stance, bow aimed and ready. It came from her left and again the same pain filled moan echoed down the dark hallway. Slowly she began to move toward the sound, keeping her bow up. Sil could feel her hearts throb in her chest, as the sound got closer with each step. She breathed slow and steady, a foul stench of decay, sweat and iron fill Sil's nostrils making her gag so much she started coughing. In her coughing fit something metal bumped off of Sil's boot. She opened her eyes and looked down to see it was her magnum. Sil crouched down, set her bow on the floor and picked up the gun. She examined it and right away knew it was hers from the markings etched into the muzzle. The back part was open, telling her the clip was empty which puzzled Sil. She was sure the last time she checked it was full and she would have known if it was empty. So why didn't she? With a deep sigh Sil put her free hand in her pockets attached to her belt to find a fresh clip, all she could find however was one bullet.

"J'A R'A FAL'A ROUN IM'A!" She swore and cursed in Kig Yar, not believing how bad her luck was getting. After a few deep breaths Sil calmed herself down. "Oh well, guess its better than no bullets."

Sil pulled out the empty clip, inserted the bullet at the top, slid it back in the handle and cocked the primer. Now if she needed to shoot through anything metal she had her lucky bullet. Stiffly Sil straighten up, holstered her sidearm once more, aimed her bow again and moved to the pained sounds. The smell got worse the closer she got, so bad Sil put her scarf over her nose again to stop feeling sick. She came to a corner and just around that she could hear the moan very clearly and some sort of crunching bone sound as well. Poking her head around the corner Sil saw a figure leaning hunched on the wall. It was a Kig Yar but Sil couldn't see his face since his back was facing her. He looked hurt, Sil could tell he was bleeding

from the blood that pooled around his feet and when she pulled her scarf down she could smell a strong scent of iron in the air. Sil didn't want to startle him so she put her bow to the side with her quiver and backpack, moved past the corner and tried to talk to him.

"Hey don't be alarmed, it's me the Sangheili girl. What happened?" The Kig Yar didn't seem to hear her instead made slurping sounds. "Hey can you hear me?" She moved up to him and tapped him on the shoulder. The Kig Yar's head twitched to the side so one of his eyes was looking at her. There was something wrong with the way he looked at her, more like an animal than a person and his eye looked faded almost white. With a low growl he slowly almost lazily turned to face her. That's when Sil realised the blood around him wasn't his own. As he turned Sil saw his lips, forehead, lower torso and arms were covered in dark purple blood. He held what looked to be a dismembered hand and from the blood on his lips Sil now knew the crunching sound had come from him eating it. Sil's eyes widen in horror as something that looked like a large growth was bulging out of his chest with little slimy tentacles wriggling excitedly toward her. Sil started backing away, her hearts pounded in her chest like hammers. She couldn't take her eyes off the monstrous growth that looked to be spreading and changing the Kig Yar's appearance into something out of a nightmare. The left side of his body looked swollen and lumpy, his left hand looked crooked and broken with over sized claws.

Sil couldn't believe her eyes. "My god what happened to you?" In response to her question the Kig Yar dropped the hand and lunged at her with teeth and claws, eyes fixed on its prey with a feral hunger. Sil swiftly sidestepped to her right and the Kig Yar went flailing past, his claws narrowly missing her face. He collapsed with a snarl and was already getting back up.

"Hey I'm not the bad guy!" Sil stated, as the Kig Yar got to his feet and fixed his hungry glare on her once again. "Nooo, I see what you're thinking, don't do it."

The Kig Yar let out a blood-chilling screech and with full speed he charged at her. Clenching her jaws in anger, Sil met the Kig Yar's charge with a powerful upwards kick to the small alien's bird like jaw. A loud popping sound came from the Kig Yar's jaw as his head snapped back from the force that came from Sil's heel. The blow didn't stop the small alien's forward momentum and went into a forward-backward spin and landed hard on his back, covering the rest of him in blood and gore. Sil spun around, pulled out her magnum and aimed it at the crazy Kig Yar who was still getting back up.

"I'm warning you, I will shoot you if you don't stop." Sil really didn't want to shoot him but she feared she might have to, for the Kig Yar was once again despite the fact he shouldn't be able to move at all was standing with his back to her.

He slowly turned his head in her direction and showed the result of Sil's kick. His entire bottom jaw hung limp under his beak and swung from side to side as he fully turned toward her and stared at her with his cold dead eyes. Sil recognised that stare, she didn't know why but she did and that scared her a lot. The Kig Yar had stopped attacking her but Sil knew it wasn't because she was pointing a gun at him. With one hand the Kig Yar took hold of his limp jaw and with a bone-grinding crack he reset his jaw. Sil's expression was one of

horrified disgust, as she couldn't believe what she had just witnessed. He flexed his jaw a bit, making small cracking sound as he did and after he stopped he did something Sil didn't see coming. He smiled, and it was the sort of smile you run from. For reasons Sil didn't understand she actually recognised that smile. With out warning an image of a deformed monstrous creature with that same smile, flashed in her mind's eye, causing her to wince as a wave of pain washed through her head and made her scrunch her eyes up. Distracted, Sil didn't see the Kig Yar crouch down and suddenly leap through the air and land right on top of her. Sil's body reacted faster than her mind and before she could stop herself, she jammed her gun up into the Kig Yar's throat and pulled the trigger. As they fell, the bullet entered just behind his chin, travailed in an angle through his brain and exited through the back of his skull in a shower of blood and gore. Sil hit the ground hard with Kig Yar's body on top. Also her gun fell from her grasp. The armour on her back screeched loudly as she slid about a meter and stopped right at the corner. The impact from the Kig Yar's body had winded Sil. He was a lot heavier than he looked as his weight pressed down on her body. She lay there breathing heavily, going over in her head what she had just done.

"Oh god, I killed him. I didn't even mean toâ€¦I couldn't stop myself." She gained enough energy to thump the floor in frustration. "Damn it why did this happen? Why did he have toâ€¦" Sil started to hear some gurgling sounds coming from the body on top of her. She lifted her head up and the first thing she saw was the massive hole that was once the back of the Kig Yar's head. The blood coming out of the wound was staining Sil's armour and clothing. "Sleav'a, that was my favourite jumper." She muttered to herself. Sil's eyes widened when she saw the Kig Yar's hand that was lying on her chest, moved. "What the hell?"

At first she thought it was just a nerve twitch but she was soon proven wrong. The Kig Yar suddenly sat up, blood and bits of brain poured out of the back of his head as he reared back, opened his mouth as wide as it could go and tried to go for her throat. At the last second Sil caught the top and bottom parts of his mouth and held them open with all her strength. Sil was strong, she knew she was but thisâ€¦thing was much stronger than she was and inch-by-inch his razor sharp teeth got closer to her neck. Sil tried to push herself up but the Kig Yar was sitting on her pelvis, preventing her from moving her legs or even sit up. Sil grunted and moaned as the Kig Yar's wide jaws closed in. She could feel his hot breath on her neck now inching ever closer. Sil's arms started to shake now from the shear effort of holding back the small alien's powerful jaws.

The Kig Yar decided to make use of his hands, clamping them around Sil's wrists and started to apply pressure. Sil cried out in pain as the armour around her wrists started to bend inward. The cloaking device on her left arm sparked and caved in from the Kig Yar's iron grip. How could so much strength come out of such a small being? She kept her hands firmly clamped where they were however, despite the pain but the Kig Yar enforced the issue. With a powerful yank he tore away the armour on Sil's left wrist, making her scream in agony as a good part of her sleeve and skin was also torn away, leaving a bloody gash that ended at her elbow. As a result Sil let go of the Kig Yar's mouth and he reared back once more for a killing bite. Sil brought her right arm up in time as the Kig Yar's jaws bit down hard on her dented armour. Sil cried out again in pain as the Kig Yar's bottom



teeth bit into the unprotected under side of her arm guard. The rest of his teeth cracked or broke on her armour.

Panic seeped into her mind. She wanted nothing more than to get this thing off of her, but from the looks of it he had her at his mercy which was non-existent at this point. Sil grunted as the monster on top of her released her arm and reared back one more time. In shock and in pain, Sil could only close her eyes and waited for the end.

It didn't come.

Suddenly the pressure of the Kig Yar's body vanished, allowing her to breath. She opened her eyes again and saw a large Sangheili who wore no armour was holding the Kig Yar who was thrashing around suspended at the throat. He did have a simple black T-shirt which was covered in slime, baggy black trousers and dark brown boots. Sil didn't need to see the robotics to tell it was Chackrol. Sil watched as he stabbed the Kig Yar in the back and through the growth in his chest. There was a loud pop as the growth exploded outward in a spray of purple and yellow blood. The Kig Yar went limp and didn't move again after that.

Chackrol yanked his shard of metal out of the Kig Yar's body and let him drop rag doll like to the floor. Chackrol's bright yellow eyes fixed themselves upon Sil, and he didn't look happy to see her. What bit of joy Sil had gained had now faded as Chackrol stormed up to her, lifted her up by the throat and pinned her to the wall but low enough for her feet to touch the floor so she didn't choke.

He then let her go only to press his massive grey skinned arm to her collar bone and press the sharp shard of metal to her throat. At this point Sil felt like she was going to faint from blood loss but the sharp metal pressed to her neck kept her wide-awake.

"What is a female like you doing all the way out here in the ass end of nowhere?" Chackrol demanded not hiding the fact he had a problem with her. "Where did you come from? Are you with Ral? What have you done with Neaola? ANSWER ME."

Sil couldn't take it. She was already in shock and Chackrol's questioning was just making it worse. "Please stop, Iâ€| ahâ€|mean you no harm."

"What, why are you speaking Human English? Are you trying to fool me because it won't work?" He pressed the metal harder to her neck, making tiny pinpricks of blood weep out of the cuts it made. "WHERE IS NEAOLA!?"

Sil couldn't hold it back any longer. The pain, the stress, not to mention the fact she was losing blood, had become too much and she started to cry. "STOP it, please stop it!" She pleaded, tears streamed down her cheeks. "I don'tâ€|I haven't seen her Iâ€|I can't rememberâ€|it's all too much, please stop I'm begging you Chackrol pleaseâ€|I don't knowâ€|." Chackrol was taken aback. His expression was one of shock and confusion as he let her slide down the wall and sit on the floor. Sil was breathing heavier with each sob, not caring anymore how it made her look, the stress was getting too much to hold back. Her head started to hurt again which made her sobbing worse as she gripped her hair tightly. Sil opened her tear-drenched eyes and

saw through the haze Chackrol kneeling down beside her damaged left arm.

"So, you are not with Ral?" Chackrol asked.

"WHO IS RAL!?" Sil yelled at Chackrol.

"I'll take that as a no."

He gently took hold of Sil's wrist, cupped his robotic hand under her elbow and lightly lifted her arm up for better inspection. His metal hand was cold against her skin and Sil whimpered loudly when he pinched the sides of her arm. "I take it you brought healing equipment with you?" He asked, no longer using his harsh tone.

"Inâ€|in my backpack, there is a med-kit. You know how to use it right?"

He didn't reply but he did go get her pack and put down beside her. He stuck his hand in the bag and pulled out things one at a time till he finally found the med-kit. "This looks important." He said, grinning with the green box in his normal hand. He opened it and took out a roll of bandages and started to rap up Sil's wound.

"Hey what are you doing?" Sil protested, still sobbing.

"What?" Chackrol said in confusion.

"At least disinfect it first."

Chackrol made a huffing sound and took out a bottle of clear liquid. He didn't wait, he poured it on to the wound and Sil grunted in pain. He then gave her a wide-eyed look and a half smirk. Because the right side of his jaws had a metal exoskeleton attached to them. "May I now use the bandages?"

"Just stop the bleeding before I pass out."

As he wrapped her wound he started asking her questions. "So young one, how do you know my name?"

Sil wiped her cheeks with one thumb as she answered his question. "Your wife Neaola told me. I was with her for a while beforeâ€|well I can't remember what happened next."

"How did you come to be here and why?"

"I came here on a Human-Kig Yar hybrid vessel with my uncle under the orders of Kala Van to help you out."

Chackrol growled at the name and may have yanked on the bandage a little too hard. "Kala Van." He said the name in such disgust, as if reliving an unpleasant memory. "That bitch has been a thorn in my side since I discovered this place."

"Your not the only one who hates her guts." Sil stated. "I would love nothing more than to give her a punch in the face."

"I wasn't thinking of just punching her." Chackrol mused. He had

gotten up to her elbow when he asked. "So who is your uncle?"

"I think you'd be better off just meeting him first."

Chackrol huffed again as he finished tightening off the bandage, making Sil wince as it nipped her wound. "And what's your name? It's been a long time since I heard a good Sangheili name. Sooooâ€|?"

"Sil." She simply answered as she checked Chackrol's handy work. Could be a bit tighter but better than nothing?

"Sil? Sil who?" Chackrol insisted.

"Its just Sil."

Chackrol raised his right eye-rig at that. "Well just Sil, I stopped the bleeding. Now please stop crying, I'm too much of a softy as it is."

Sil let herself smile a little at that as she looked at her wrapped up wound. The once pure white bandages were now soaked in her blood, going all the way from her upper wrist to her elbow. Chackrol sat down beside her and was quiet, as she looked at her other arm. It wasn't as bad but the Kig Yar's bite had bit deep in her skin and torn her sleeve up. She undid the straps of her arm guard and tore away with the rest of her sleeve, revelling the bite mark beneath.

"Is there any more bandages?" Sil asked.

Chackrol lazily looked in the green box and shook his head. "Only the one I just used."

"Damn it, guess I'm going to have to use my torn sleeve." With out even having to ask, Chackrol gave her the disinfectant and just sighed like an old man. His breath stank of something horrid and Sil had to make an effort not to gag. "Umâ€|thanks?" Sil said as she took the bottle.

After cleaning and wrapping up her bite wound, Sil leaned back on the cold wall, letting out a weary sigh. Her energy was depleting and she didn't know if she could take much more of this hellhole. Her thoughts went back to what had happened minutes ago. "I shot him in the head. I killed him yet he was still alive."

"Oh no he was dead, trust me on that."

Sil's eyes widened at his response, not quite believing him. "So I did kill him?"

"No."

Sil frowned. "Wait, now your making no sense. Did I or did I not kill him?"

Chackrol chuckled a bit. "You couldn't have killed him because he was already dead."

Now Sil had lost his point completely. "Wait so, you're telling me he

was a zombie?"

"I don't know what a zombie is you call it. But I tell you now, that Kig Yar whoever he may have been was very dead. Way before you found him"

Sil was so confused she couldn't make sense of it. How could one be dead yet not dead?

Sil's thoughts were slapped aside as knife stabbing pain shot through her brain like fire. She gripped her head with both hands as the pain continued to burn inside her head. She knew the pain all too well and was confused why it was happening so soon.

"What is wrong?" Chackrol leaned over her and put his real hand on her forehead. "You are burning up. Why?"

Sil cut him off with a sharp inhale. Her words came out fragmented "In the bag silver case get it quickly."

Chackrol once more rummaged in her bag and pulled out the hilt of the energy sword. "Who's?"

"Just get the case hurry." Her mind was a world of pain, like a red-hot iron case locked around her skull and never cooling.

Finally he pulled out the small silver case and handed it to her. Sil snatched the case from Chackrol's large hand, opened the lid on her lap, picked up the needle, filled it half way with the clear green liquid from one of the vials and injected it in the side of her neck. Instantly the pain vanished along with the overwhelming heat, leaving a cold ice feeling in her mind. Cold sweat trickled down her forehead and dripped off her nose. Now she felt completely drained as she discarded the needle and looked at Chackrol who looked completely confused.

"Wonderful, the first Sangheili woman I meet in five years had to be an addict."

Sil gave him an angry look, not at all finding this funny. "I'm not an addict, I have a physical condition in my brain and if I don't treat it with this" She brought up the empty vial, "I could die in a very painful way."

Chackrol just stared at her blankly, his yellow eyes glowing slightly in the dim light. "I don't know many of the words you just used but I got the it could kill you part." He started to look a little concerned. "Sounds bad, and whose blade is this?"

Sil was about to speak when her ear-mike went off and she could hear a voice but it was distorted. "Sil, come over we need to" The signal cut out but Sil knew that voice anywhere. Sil had a new drive now, the will to keep going, to find uncle Jack.

"Who was that?" Chackrol asked.

"It's my uncle, he's alive and I think Neola is with him to."

Chackrol's eyes widened at the name of his wife and he stood up.  
"Well what are we sitting around for lets get moving."

Sil didn't bother putting her arm guard back on so she threw it away to clatter somewhere. She unsteadily tried to stand but her knees were having none of it. "Can you help me up?" Sil asked Chackrol who again looked at her blankly. With a sigh he extended a hand and helped her up. After gathering her things, gun and bow, Sil looked at Chackrol who was still holding the blade hilt the belonging to Teal'c and asked him. "Where do we go?"

Chackrol pondered for a moment then pointed with his right arm down the way Sil hadn't been yet. "There's another hallway back this way. I was going to go down it when I heard the struggle here."

"Ok lead the way then."

And with nothing else to say they both made their way down the dim hallway and Sil hoped she would run into her uncle along the way.

End  
file.